

The Fight for the West

BEFORE YOU READ

MAIN IDEA

Native Americans fought the movement of settlers westward, but the U.S. military and the persistence of American settlers proved too strong to resist.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. How was the stage set for conflict between white settlers and Native Americans in the West?
2. What were the Indian Wars and their consequences?
3. How did Native American resistance to white settlement end?
4. What was life like on the Indian reservations?

KEY TERMS AND PEOPLE

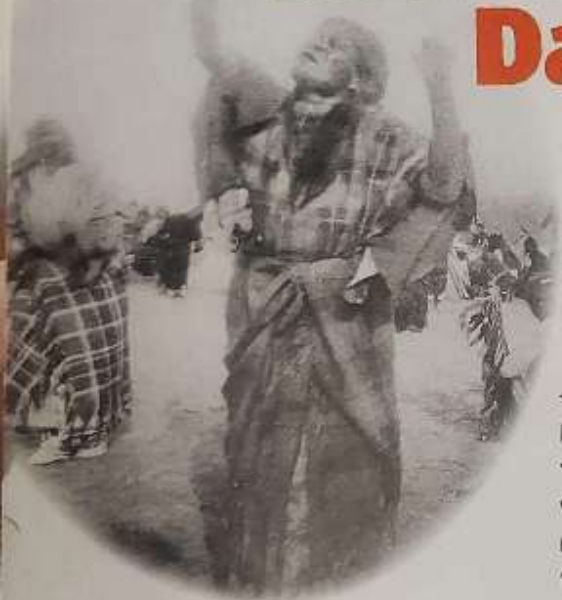
Sand Creek Massacre
Sitting Bull
George Armstrong Custer
Battle of the Little Bighorn
Wounded Knee Massacre
Chief Joseph
Geronimo
Americanization
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Dawes Act

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes on the outcomes of clashes between Americans and Native Americans. Record your notes in a graphic organizer like the one shown here.

Battle	Outcome

The Ghost Dance



◀ Some Plains Indians hoped the Ghost Dance would help them reclaim their former ways of life.

THE INSIDE STORY

What would you do to save your culture? By the 1890s Native Americans and their cultures faced extinction. People had lost their land, homes, and food sources. In utter desperation, many Indians turned to traditional religion—and to a prophet with a new message of hope.

Wovoka, a shaman of the Northern Paiute in Nevada, became known as a healer who could bring rain. Working for white farmers, Wovoka learned about Christianity and its belief in a messiah, or savior. In 1889 he had a vision that he spoke with God in heaven, where he saw many who had

died. The dream, he said, told him to bring the Indians a new message and a sacred dance. According to most surviving accounts, the message was that the people should get along and not steal or lie or go to war. They were to perform the special Ghost Dance five nights in a row. Wovoka promised that a messiah would come to save only the Indians.

Wovoka's message, and the Ghost Dance movement, spread across the central Plains. During the frenzied dances people saw visions of buffalo herds returning and white settlers leaving the West. The Ghost Dance offered hope. But as you will read, it ultimately led to tragedy. ■

Stage Set for Conflict

The Ghost Dance was an expression of deepest grief about the loss of Native Americans' ways of life. As white settlers began streaming into the West, Native Americans and white settlers clashed over control of the land. U.S. government actions compounded the tensions.

Culture of the Plains Indians The Sioux, Blackfoot, and Cheyenne of the northern Plains and the Kiowa and Comanche of the southern Plains thrived thanks to the abundance of wild buffalo, their main source of food, clothing, shoes, shelter, and supplies. The Plains Indians lived a nomadic lifestyle, traveling the great grasslands on horseback as they followed the migrations of the buffalo herds. They did not believe that land should be bought and sold.

Most white settlers were farmers or town dwellers. They believed that land should be divided and claims given to people to farm or establish businesses. If

Native Americans would not settle down in one place, many Americans believed, then their lands were available for the taking.

Government policy In the mid-1800s the United States government's Indian policy underwent a key change. Previously the Army had forcibly removed Native Americans from the East and relocated them farther west. By the 1850s growing numbers of white settlers wanted to move into those western lands as well. So instead of pushing the Indians further westward, the government began seizing their land and sending them to reservations. The goal was to break the power of the Plains Indians and open up their lands for settlement. Americans generally agreed with this new policy.

Destruction of the buffalo For Plains Indians, being confined to reservations threatened their buffalo-centered way of life. Yet the vast herds that had supported them for countless generations now were being driven to extinction. In 1800 some 60 million buffalo had lived on the Plains. Remarkably, by 1894 perhaps as few as 25 buffalo remained. The

catastrophe had several causes. White settlement reduced buffalo grazing lands and cut off migration routes. Settlers' livestock carried diseases that destroyed buffalo herds.

Yet other more deliberate actions by whites hastened the catastrophe. U.S. Army adopted a policy of encouraging the destruction of the buffalo. It sought to wipe out the Plains Indians' food supply to force them onto reservations.

One of the most dramatic causes of destruction was the hunting of buffalo for sport and profit. With the expansion of railroads across the Plains, buffalo hides could easily be shipped east, where demand for them increased in the 1870s. Hides were used to make belts for factory machines and fashionable buffalo robes.

For pleasure, railroads offered "hunting specials," allowing passengers to shoot buffalo from the train. The slaughter was so massive that in one summer, several railroads had to cancel their hunting specials. The stench of buffalo carcasses sickened passengers.

READING CHECK

Identifying Problems and Solutions

How did Americans deal with Indians that stood in the way of their westward expansion?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

policy plan, course of action

HUNTING ON THE PLAINS

Strength, speed, agility, and accuracy made Plains horsemen skilled hunters, highly respected in their communities

Hunters used spears and arrows to bring down the huge beasts. Families then harvested the skin, bones, meat, and tissue, wasting little.

Skills Focus

READING LIKE A HISTORIAN

Artist John Mix Stanley had a keen sense that he was chronicling a vanishing way of life as he painted *Buffalo Hunt on the Southwestern Prairies* in 1845.

Interpreting Visuals What qualities does Stanley convey about the hunters?



The Indian Wars

Tensions between the settlers and the Plains Indians escalated into decades of violence that swept the Indians from most of the West. The conflicts are known as the Indian Wars.

The Sand Creek Massacre In Colorado Territory, a band of Cheyenne raided nearby ranches in 1864. Army officials offered amnesty, or forgiveness, if they returned to their reservation at Sand Creek. Cheyenne chief Black Kettle wanted peace. He led his people back.

Before dawn on November 29, Army colonel John M. Chivington arrived at Sand Creek with about 700 troops. Black Kettle raised an American flag and a white flag as a sign of peace. But Chivington did not want peace. "It is simply not possible for Indians to obey or even understand any treaty," he said. "[T]o kill them is the only way we will ever have peace . . . in Colorado."

Chivington's troops opened fire and killed about 150 people, mostly women, children, and elderly people. After burning the camp to the ground, the troops returned to Denver with scalps, which they displayed to cheering crowds. News of the **Sand Creek Massacre** outraged many Americans. Congressional investigators condemned Chivington's actions as atrocities, but they did not punish him.

Treaties After the Sand Creek Massacre, enraged Cheyenne stepped up raids. The Sioux did as well. A swelling stream of travelers along the Bozeman Trail were passing through sacred Sioux hunting grounds. The Sioux chief Red Cloud had tried without success to negotiate an end to white encroachment in this area. In December 1866 the Sioux attacked a supply wagon train outside newly built Fort Kearny. When a patrol of some 80 soldiers tried to drive off the war party, the Sioux killed the entire group of soldiers.

MAJOR BATTLES AND NATIVE AMERICAN
TERRITORY IN THE WEST, 1890



Finally, the government agreed to close the Bozeman Trail. In exchange, officials pressured the Sioux to sign the Second Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868. The Sioux agreed to live on a reservation along the Missouri River.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials forced the Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne, and other southern nations to sign the Medicine Lodge Treaty in 1867. Those nations would be moved to reservations in what is now western Oklahoma.

Battle of the Little Bighorn For years the Lakota Sioux conducted raids against white settlers who had moved into Sioux lands. In response, the U.S. government ordered all Lakota Sioux to return to their reservation by January 31, 1876. They refused. The situation was turned over to the military.

About 2,000 Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho gathered near the Little Bighorn River. The leader of the Sioux, **Sitting Bull**, conducted a ceremonial sun dance. He reportedly had a vision of a great victory over soldiers.

The brash leader of the U.S. Army troops, Lieutenant Colonel **George Armstrong Custer**, predicted victory as well. On June 25, 1876, Custer led his troops into a headlong attack against superior numbers. Custer and his troops were quickly encircled and slaughtered. The **Battle of the Little Bighorn** was a tremendous victory for the Sioux—but a temporary one. Now the U.S. government was even more determined to put down the Indian threat to settlers.

The Battle of Palo Duro Canyon In the Texas Panhandle, Colonel Ranald McKenzie caught Comanches, Kiowas, and Cheyennes preparing a winter encampment in the fall of 1874. He sent in his cavalry. Some Indians fled; others defended their scattered camps. Then McKenzie's men slaughtered more than 1,000 Indian ponies and destroyed all food stores. Starving Comanches led by Quanah Parker had no choice but to move onto the reservation in Indian Territory the following spring. The Indian Wars in the southern Plains were over.

The Ghost Dance As you read earlier, word spread that a Paiute shaman, Wovoka, had received a powerful vision in 1889. Wovoka declared that the Indian dead would live again, the buffalo would return, and the settlers would leave. Wovoka's vision developed into a

religious movement. Known to outsiders as the Ghost Dance, it inspired hope among Native Americans who were suffering terribly.

In August 1890 newspapers began suggesting that the Ghost Dance was a sign of a coming uprising. A small but very vocal group of whites began asking the government for help.

In December 1890 the U.S. military ordered the arrest of Sitting Bull, who had joined the Ghost Dance movement. A skirmish broke out, and Sitting Bull was killed. Many of Sitting Bull's band of Sioux fled west. The weary Sioux surrendered to U.S. troops, who took them to Wounded Knee Creek, in modern-day South Dakota, to make camp.

The Wounded Knee Massacre The next morning, Colonel James Forsyth of the 7th Cavalry ordered the Sioux to give up their rifles. One young man named Black Coyote did not want to give up his gun, and in his struggle with the soldiers, the gun went off. Instantly, the Sioux and the soldiers began shooting.

About half of the Sioux men were killed right away. Women and children fled, but soldiers pursued them. By the end of the fight, about 300 Sioux men, women, and children lay dead. Bodies of women and children were found as far as three miles from the camp.

The **Wounded Knee Massacre** shocked many Americans. General Nelson Miles was so outraged that he removed Forsyth from command. Others in the army did not share Miles' concern, however. Three officers and 15 enlisted men received the Medal of Honor for their actions.

Wounded Knee marked the end of the bloody conflict between the army and the Plains Indians. Black Elk, a survivor of the massacre, came to realize what the loss truly meant:

HISTORY'S VOICES

“I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from this high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children . . . as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream . . .”

—From “Black Elk Speaks,” ca. 1932

READING CHECK

Identifying the Main Idea

What were the U.S. Army and the Plains Indians fighting over in the Indian Wars?

THE IMPACT TODAY

Culture

To this day Wounded Knee remains a symbol of injustice toward Native Americans. In 1973, so-called “Wounded Knee II,” a standoff between the U.S. military and Indians protesting discrimination, ended in the deaths of two Indian activists.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

traditional
established,
customary

Resistance Ends in the West

West of the Great Plains, Native Americans struggled to maintain their traditional ways of life. Their stories ended in tragedy as well.

Resistance in the Northwest In 1855 the Nez Percé (NEZ PUHRS) agreed to move onto a reservation in Idaho and Oregon. But in 1863, as gold miners and settlers began streaming onto the reservation, the U.S. government took back nine tenths of the Nez Percé land.

In 1877 the Indians were ordered to abandon the last portion of their Oregon homeland and move into a small section of Idaho. Their leader, **Chief Joseph**, reluctantly agreed. In the meantime, hostilities broke out among settlers and some young Nez Percé. The Indians—warriors, women, and children—were forced to flee, with the army in close pursuit.

The Nez Percé headed to Canada, fighting major battles as they fled. Less than 40 miles from the Canadian border, Joseph and his people were forced to surrender to the U.S. Army.

HISTORY'S VOICES

“I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. . . It is cold, and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. . . My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.”

—Chief Joseph, statement at his surrender, 1877

FACES OF HISTORY

Chief JOSEPH

1840–1904



Chief Joseph became the leader of the Nez Percé in 1871. He struggled to preserve his people's way of life and their homeland in the

forested Wallowa Valley. In 1877 when the U.S. government ordered the Nez Percé to relocate to a reservation, Joseph at first agreed, but then was forced to flee. He attempted to escape into Canada with about 750 of his people. On a historic journey across Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, they defeated pursuing troops who greatly outnumbered them. Traveling with families, low on supplies, the warriors managed to evade the U.S. Army for more than three months.

Ultimately, though, Chief Joseph saw that resistance was futile. To protect his hungry and exhausted people, Joseph surrendered. In the years that followed, the Nez Percé leader continued to speak out against the injustices of U.S. policy toward Native Americans.

Drawing Conclusions Why did Joseph hope to reach Canada?

Chief Joseph and his people were taken first to eastern Kansas and then to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), where many died. Half of the Nez Percé were eventually returned to Idaho, but Chief Joseph and many others were sent to northern Washington State.

Resistance in the Southwest In the 1870s the government had moved the Apache peoples to the San Carlos Reservation along the Gila River in Arizona. Soldiers had forcefully stopped a religious gathering there in 1881. The Apache leader **Geronimo** fled the reservation with dozens of others.

Geronimo's band of Apache led raids on both sides of the Arizona-Mexico border for years. Geronimo briefly returned to reservation life in 1884. But soon he resumed raiding settlements. Captured one last time in September 1886, Geronimo and his followers were sent to an Apache internment camp in Florida as prisoners of war. Geronimo's surrender marked the end of armed resistance in the Southwest.

READING CHECK

Summarizing How did Native American resistance end in the Northwest and Southwest regions?

Life on the Reservations

The U.S. government had two reasons for creating Indian reservations. First, it wanted control over all the western territories. Second, many Americans wanted Native Americans to abandon their traditional culture and religion and live like white Americans.

Americanization Starting in about 1870, the government's Indian policy changed yet again. Most government officials and reformers began to believe that Native Americans would be better off if they abandoned their culture and adopted the culture of white America. The new thinking was that instead of removal, treaties, reservations, or war, the government should pursue a policy of **Americanization**.

Americanization entailed a wholesale attack on Native American beliefs and practices, starting with tribal identity. The federal agency that managed the Native American reservations, the **Bureau of Indian Affairs** (BIA), began issuing wide-ranging orders that left few aspects of Indian culture untouched.

HISTORY'S VOICES

"You are therefore directed to induce your male Indians to cut their hair, and both sexes to stop painting [their faces]. . . The wearing of citizens' clothing, instead of the Indian costume and blanket, should be encouraged."

—BIA letter to Greenville Indian School, California, 1902

The government built schools for Native American children, often hundreds of miles away from the students' homes. In these schools, students could only speak English and could not wear their traditional clothing. Every effort was made to discourage students from practicing their own culture so that they might learn to live like white Americans.

The Dawes Act Congress took a significant step in the Americanization process when it passed the **Dawes Act** in 1887. The new law broke up most reservations and turned Native Americans into individual property owners. Each head of family received 160 acres. Each single person over 18 years old received 80 acres, and each child would receive 40 acres. Any land left over would be sold.

The BIA and reformers, some well-intentioned, believed this shift would transform the Indians' relationship to the land. Ownership would provide incentives to succeed, they thought—and then the federal government could slash support for reservations.



The Carlisle Indian Industrial School was a school for assimilation in Pennsylvania. Boys and girls were taught to read, write, and learn industrial and domestic activities of white American culture. The left photo shows some Lakota boys upon their arrival at the school. **What changes do you see in them in the right photo, after they have spent some time at the school?**

The government, however, gave the less productive land to the Indians and sold off the best land. Many Native Americans received near-desert lands unsuitable for farming. But even when Indians received good land, many could not afford the tools, animals, seed, and other supplies necessary to start farms.

READING CHECK Identifying Supporting

Details What was the Dawes Act?

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

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Online Quiz

Keyword: SD7 HP13

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Explain** Why was the destruction of the buffalo significant to the lives of Native Americans on the Plains?

b. Evaluate How did U.S. government policies bring the army into conflict with Plains Indians?
- a. Define** What were the Indian Wars?

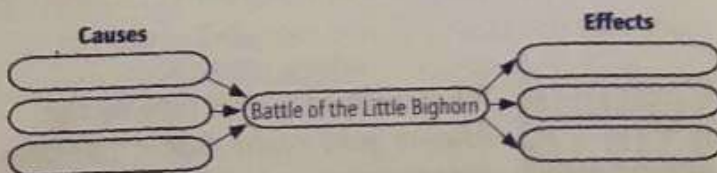
b. Compare How did Americans and Indians react to the Sand Creek Massacre and the Wounded Knee Massacre?
- a. Identify** Which events marked the end of armed resistance by Native Americans in the Northwest and the Southwest?

b. Draw Conclusions What factors brought about the end of the Indian resistance?
- a. Describe** What was the process of Americanization?

b. Make Inferences What did Americanization reveal about white Americans' views of Native Americans?

Critical Thinking

- Identifying Cause and Effect** Copy the chart below and record causes and effects of the Battle of the Little Bighorn.



FOCUS ON WRITING

- Expository** Suppose you have been living among the Lakota Sioux. Newspapers have frightened local settlers by suggesting that the Ghost Dance is a sign of a coming Indian uprising. Write a letter to the editor explaining the true meaning of the Ghost Dance.

Mining and Ranching

BEFORE YOU READ

MAIN IDEA

Many people sought fortunes during the mining and cattle booms of the American West.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

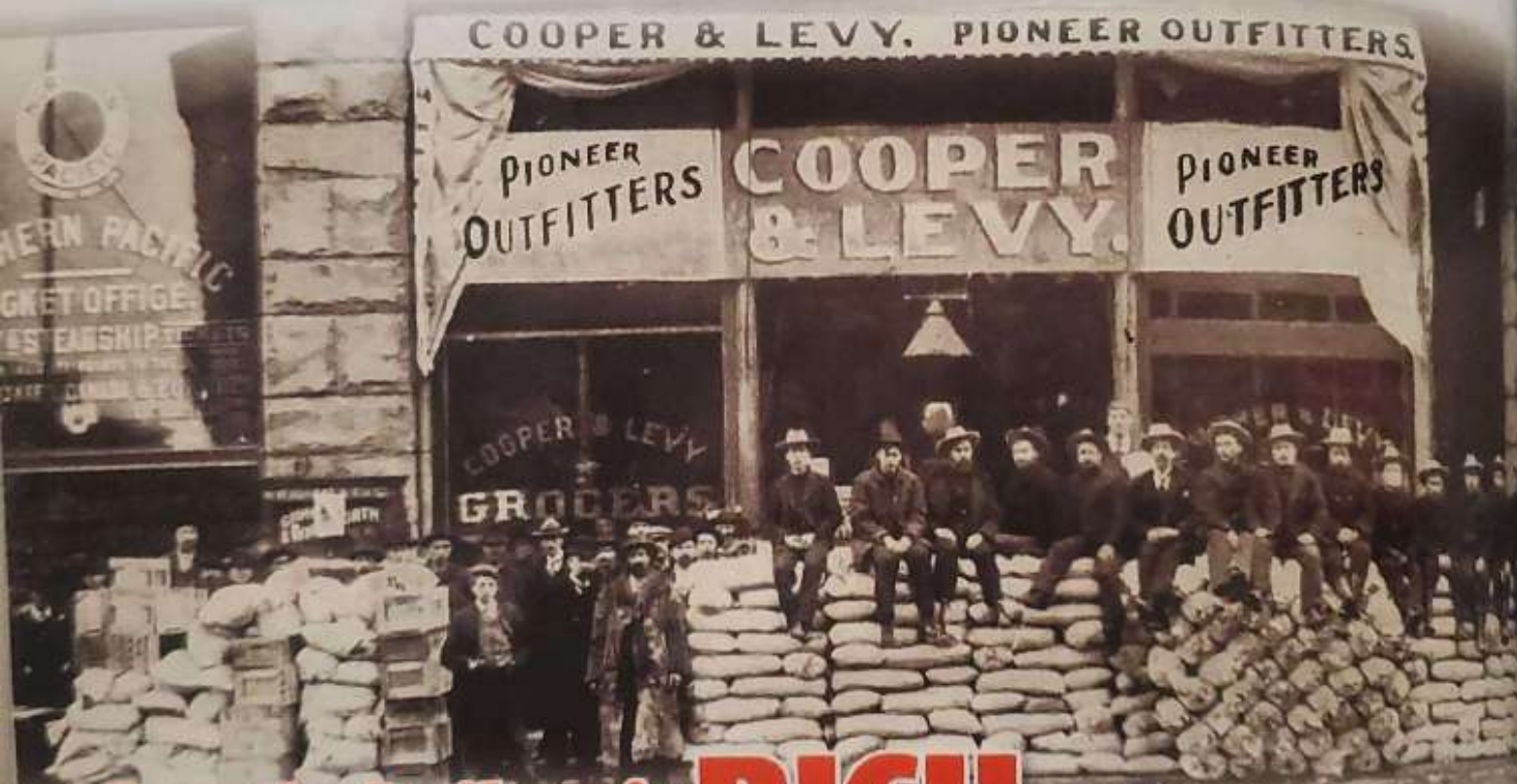
1. How did mining lead to new settlements in the West?
2. Why did mining become big business?
3. How and why did the cattle boom come to an end?

KEY TERMS AND PEOPLE

Comstock Lode
placer mining
hydraulic mining
hard-rock mining
Chisholm Trail
Joseph Glidden

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes on the rise and fall of the cattle boom in the West. Record your notes in a graphic organizer like the one shown here.



Seattle Strikes it RICH

▲ Miners seeking gold in the Klondike stocked up on provisions in Seattle.

THE INSIDE STORY

Who really struck it rich in the Alaska gold rush? Gold in the Klondike! As the news spread, some 100,000

miners raced to Alaska. Several cities in the Pacific Northwest became boomtowns, but the richest by far was Seattle, Washington. Some two thirds of the prospectors passed through Seattle. Its merchants were ready, offering everything from tents to miners' shoes to "Alaska Dog Feed."

"The stores are ablaze with Klondike goods; men pass by robed in [odd] garments," a local newspaper reported

in 1897. It observed "teams of trained dogs, trotting about with sleds; men with packs upon their backs, and a thousand and one things which are of use in the Klondike trade." Women could even get advice on choosing the right outfit.

The city's success was no accident. Erastus Brainerd, a former Boston museum curator, led an energetic campaign to promote Seattle as the one-stop marketplace for miners.

Few miners hit it rich in Alaska, of course. But the Klondike Gold Rush brought a fortune to the city of Seattle.

Striking Gold and Silver

The California gold rush of 1849 had captured the imaginations of many Americans. New mining strikes inspired thousands of people to rush to the West in search of fortune.

As the news of each new discovery spread, miners raced from one gold or silver strike to the next—to Idaho, Montana, the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory, Arizona, and to Cripple Creek, Colorado. Miners were excited by reports of others finding riches.

Discovering gold and silver After the California gold rush, the first promising mining discovery occurred in Colorado. In 1858 prospectors found gold near Pikes Peak. Thousands flocked to the area. Most left disappointed.

In 1859 prospectors found silver in the Carson River valley of present-day Nevada. Thousands of miners rushed to this mine, which became known as the **Comstock Lode**. Over the next 20 years, miners took about \$500 million worth of silver from the Comstock Lode.

The Klondike gold rush “Gold! Gold! Gold!” shouted the headline of the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* on July 17, 1897. A huge gold strike had been made along the Klondike River in Canada’s remote Yukon Territory near the Alaska border. Soon gold was discovered on the Alaska side of the border as well. Over the next year, about 100,000 Americans stampeded to the Klondike in search of riches.

Getting to the Klondike was treacherous. Canadian officials required that miners bring enough provisions for a year—nearly a ton of goods. Prospectors brought groceries, clothing, hardware, tents, packsaddles, camp stoves, bedding, and sleds. Prospectors made slow progress, having to move a year’s worth of supplies—weighing as much as a ton—over rough terrain. One miner wrote about the hardship.

HISTORY’S VOICES

“My feet are sore, my heels are blistered, my legs sore and lame, my hands, neck, shoulders, sore and chafed from rope. But boys, don’t think I’m discouraged. . . there is a golden glimmer in the distance.”

—Prospector Fred Dewey

Like the majority of gold seekers in previous gold rushes, most of the prospectors who

reached the Klondike came away disappointed. The best gold-bearing creeks had already been claimed, and the reports of “gold for the taking” had been greatly exaggerated.

Mining camps Most prospectors were men. They came from all over the United States as well as from other nations. Thousands poured into mining areas from Mexico, England, Ireland, China, and many other countries.

Almost as soon as gold was discovered, prospectors would swarm into the region. They set up camps that were little more than groups of tents or hastily built shacks. Most camps had no law enforcement. Since miners were competing against each other for gold, the intense rivalry frequently led to violence.

Some people formed their own vigilante committees to combat theft and violence, but

PRIMARY SOURCES

Letter

Many of the gold seekers were like Hunter Fitzhugh, an unemployed young man who left Kentucky for Alaska in 1897. He gave up his quest after three years. This letter describes life in his mining camp.

“I am sitting in my flannel shirt sleeves . . . at our . . . dining table, by a little bit of window made of celluloid instead of glass . . . I am the cook this week, and am at present cooking peas, evaporated potatoes, evaporated eggs, tomatoes, and corn-starch pudding . . . I washed my shirt and my other pair of socks [yesterday evening], so don’t have to repeat the performance for at least two months. The sun never sets now, and all night is just the same as all day . . . To be sure I long for home and civilization, . . . but on the other hand if I was in the States I would be under the eye and hand of a boss, or out of a job . . . I may get next to a claim this year that will net me \$125,000.00 . . . who knows.”

Skills Focus

READING LIKE A HISTORIAN

- 1. Making Inferences** What does Fitzhugh believe the future holds for him?
- 2. Analyzing Primary Sources** What does Fitzhugh’s description tell you about supplies and sanitary conditions in the mining camps?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H28–29

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

invest put money into in order to gain a financial return

their methods were often excessively violent. An accused criminal could be hanged after a speedy and unofficial “trial” of sorts.

Camps become towns Some of the sprawling mining camps developed into towns. These early towns had dirt streets, wooden sidewalks, and hastily constructed buildings. Stores and saloons sprang up, seemingly overnight.

As towns developed, more women and children came to join the men. The arrival of families often turned rough-and-tumble towns into prosperous, respectable communities. Townspeople established churches, schools, newspapers—even opera houses.

READING CHECK Sequencing How did Western mining camps evolve into towns?

Mining as Big Business

In the early days of the Gold Rush, individual prospectors worked with hand tools. Some found gold through **placer mining**, in which minerals are found in loose sand or gravel. The simplest form of placer mining was panning for gold. It was a cheap but tough way for an individual to try to make money.

When the surface deposits of gold ran out, miners needed more sophisticated equipment to extract gold from deeper within the earth.

Large companies were formed to **invest** in this expensive equipment. By the 1880s, mining was dominated by these big companies.

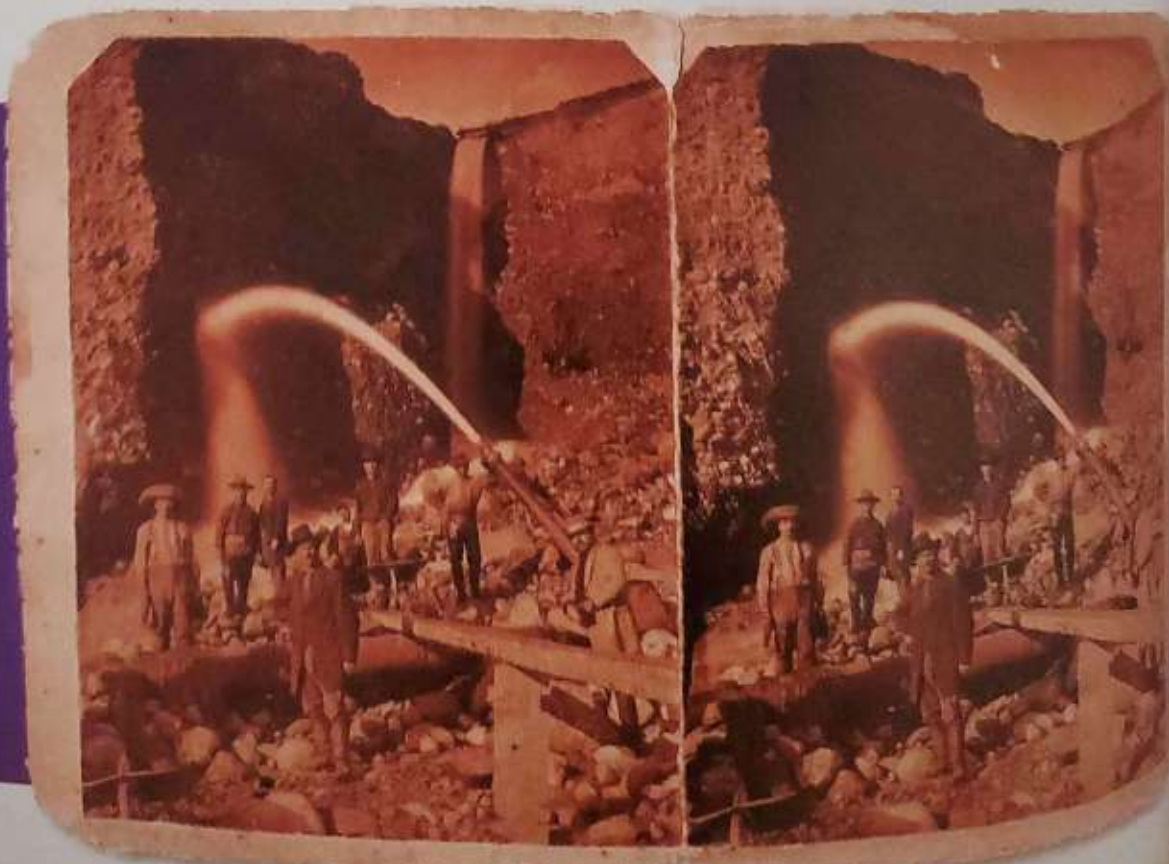
Mining companies used two methods to extract the ore. **Hydraulic mining** used water under high pressure to blast away dirt, exposing the minerals underneath. This method sent sediment into rivers, choking them and causing floods. **Hard-rock mining** required cutting deep shafts in solid rock to extract the ore.

Miners became employees of mining companies rather than lone prospectors. They dug mine shafts, built tunnels, and drilled and processed ore. For some it was better than relying on their own luck. Yet it carried plenty of risks. Countless miners died in cave-ins, underground fires, explosions, and flooded mines.

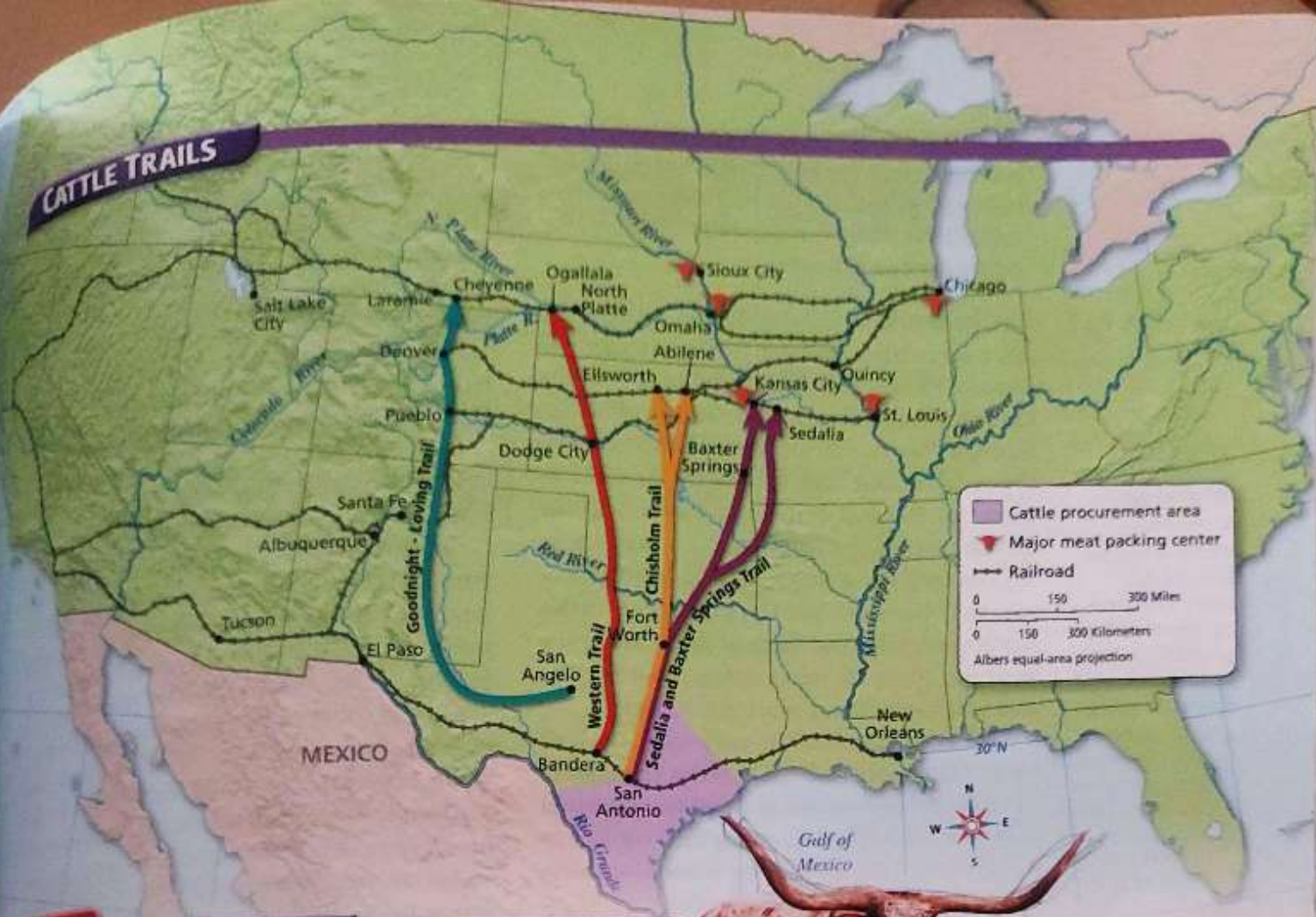
In some towns, miners began to organize unions to negotiate for safer working conditions and better pay. The mining companies bitterly resisted these efforts. In Cripple Creek, Colorado, violent conflict broke out in 1903 between members of the Western Federation of Miners and corporate mining interests determined to crush the union. When it was over, 30 men had been killed in numerous gun battles, and the union was defeated.

READING CHECK Contrasting How did working conditions for miners change once mining companies took over?

Hydraulic mining was a large-scale form of placer mining. Miners diverted water from a high to a low elevation. The water exited a small nozzle, called a monitor, at 5,000 pounds of pressure. Hydraulic mining was banned in 1884 because of its negative effects on farmers. **How did hydraulic mining affect farmers?**



CATTLE TRAILS



INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Movement** Describe how cattle made their way from Texas to markets in the north. Use the map key to help you.
 - 2. Region** Why were longhorns suited to this journey?
- See **Skills Handbook**, p. H19



Texas longhorns are well named, sporting horns that can span four feet. Six million of these docile beasts made the long journey to market during the cattle boom.

The Cattle Boom

In the decades after the Civil War, with the buffalo hunted to near extinction and most Native Americans confined to reservations, a new business came to dominate the economy of the Plains. Cattle ranching offered a way to “mine” the lush prairie grasses for profit.

Origins of Western ranching The first ranchers in the West were the Spanish, who brought cattle to the New World from Spain in the 1500s. The Spanish, and later the Mexicans, became adept at raising cattle under dry and difficult environmental conditions.

These ranchers interbred Spanish and English cattle to develop a new breed that thrived on the Plains: the Texas longhorn. Unlike other breeds, the Texas longhorn were hardy, could travel long distances without much water, and

could live on grass alone. They also had immunity to Texas fever, a disease that was deadly to other breeds of cattle.

The Spanish also introduced sheep ranching to the West. In the Southwest, Navajos and Pueblos raised sheep as well. After the Civil War, New England mills increased their demand for raw wool to produce cloth. Sheep ranchers responded to that demand by raising new breeds of sheep that produced more wool.

Cowboys complained that sheep ruined the grass for cattle by eating the roots. Conflicts between sheep owners and cattle owners sometimes became violent as they competed for grazing land on the open range.

Demand for beef After the Civil War, cities in the East clamored for beef to feed their growing populations. By 1866 a steer that might sell for as little as \$4 in Texas could bring \$40 up

north. The age of the cattle drives had begun. Ranchers hired cowboys to drive the cattle to railheads, or towns with railroads, where the cattle could then be shipped to meatpacking centers such as Chicago.

Cattle trails Several different cattle trails ran from cattle country in Texas to major rail centers. One of the most important was the **Chisholm Trail**, which began in San Antonio, ran through Fort Worth, and ended in the Kansas towns of Abilene and Ellsworth. By 1871 as many as 600,000 cattle traveled along the Chisholm Trail in a single year.

The long drive north usually lasted three months. Cowboys gently urged the cattle northward, allowing them to graze along the trail for 10 or 12 miles a day. Pushing the animals faster risked causing a stampede.

About two thirds of the cowboys on the trail were white teenage boys between the ages of 12 and 18, but substantial numbers of African American and Hispanic young men worked as cowboys as well. Even a few women—usually disguised as men—rode the trails.

Ranching as big business Cattle owners often had trouble keeping track of their herds on the open range. By the 1870s, however, a new invention allowed ranchers to enclose some of their grazing lands. **Joseph Glidden** of De Kalb, Illinois, received a patent for barbed wire, a fencing material made of sharp, pointed pieces

of wire, or barbs, wrapped around a strand of wire. Barbed wire made excellent fences on the Plains, where wood and stone were scarce.

Privately owned cattle ranches spread quickly across the Great Plains. Between 1882 and 1886, more than 400 cattle corporations sprang up in Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, and New Mexico. Most of these were backed by eastern and European investors. This transformed the cattle business into big business.

The enclosure of the open range led to conflicts between landless cattle owners and the ranchers and farmers who enclosed the land. Some ranchers were reckless with their enclosures, stringing barbed wire across public lands or other people's property, even blocking public roads. This set off a wave of fence cutting in 1883, which slowed the next year when the Texas legislature made fence cutting a felony.

The severe winters of 1885–1886 and 1886–1887 brought staggering losses to the cattle industry. Cattle migrating south to avoid harsh blizzards were trapped by drift fences, which stretched from eastern New Mexico and across the Texas Panhandle to Indian Territory (modern-day Oklahoma). The drift fences had been built to prevent the spread of cattle with Texas fever, but they proved deadly. Trapped by the fences, thousands of cattle perished in a disaster cattle owners called the “Big Die-up.”

READING CHECK

Identifying Cause and Effect What factors caused the Western cattle boom?

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

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Online Quiz

Keyword: SD7 HP13

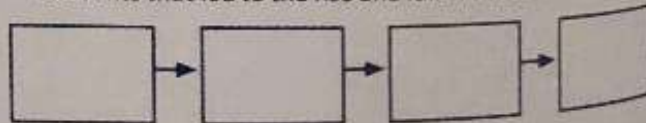
Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Recall** What difficulties did miners face in reaching the mining districts of the Klondike?
b. Summarize How did mining lead to the establishment of new towns in the West?
- a. Describe** What resources did mining companies have that individual prospectors did not?
b. Contrast How did placer mining, hydraulic mining, and hard-rock mining differ?
- a. Identify** What was the importance of the Texas longhorn?
b. Make Generalizations How did ranching become established in the West?
- a. Describe** How did cowboys move cattle from ranch lands in southern Texas to the railroads in Kansas?

- b. Evaluate** What could have been done to avoid the problems that struck the Western cattle industry?

Critical Thinking

- Sequencing** Copy the chart below and record the sequence of events that led to the rise and fall of the cattle drives.



FOCUS ON WRITING

- Expository** Take the position of a cattle owner who owned land in Texas or one who did not. Based on your position, write a letter arguing for or against the use of barbed wire on the open range.

THE IMPACT TODAY

Economics

Battles over land use continue today. Often they center on whether companies should be allowed to drill for oil and natural gas or to conduct logging operations in wilderness areas previously off-limits to development.

Farming the Plains

BEFORE YOU READ

MAIN IDEA

The government promoted the settlement of the West, offering free or cheap land to those willing to put in the hard work of turning the land into productive farms.

READING FOCUS

1. What incentives encouraged farmers to settle in the West?
2. Which groups of people moved to the West, and why did they do so?
3. What new ways of farming evolved in the West?

KEY TERMS AND PEOPLE

sod house
Homestead Act
Pacific Railway Act
Morrill Act
Frederick Jackson Turner
Benjamin "Pap" Singleton
Exoduster
dugout
James Oliver
bonanza farm

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes

on government policies intended to encourage settlement of the West. Record your notes in a graphic organizer like the one shown here.

Policy	How It Encouraged Settlement

"Home, Sweet Soddie"

► The humble sod house had the advantage of being cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Notice the cow grazing on the roof.



THE INSIDE STORY

Could you live in a house made of dirt? Uriah Oblinger, a Civil War veteran, staked his claim in Fillmore County,

Nebraska, and began to build what he called his "sod mansion." Oblinger, along with his wife, Mattie, and their baby daughter, were among the thousands of pioneer families whose first home in the West was a **sod house**, or "soddie."

Sod is a strip or block of dense grass with the roots and soil attached. The tough roots of the prairie grasses made ideal sod. With some effort it could be cut and stacked like bricks to make thick-walled homes that stayed warm in harsh prairie winters and cool in the blazing summers. In the treeless Plains, sod was a popular building material.

In a letter home, Uriah reported proudly that in nine days, he had hauled the sod, built walls, and put in window and door frames. All that was left was to put on a roof and level the floor. Most soddies had dirt floors. People sometimes smoothed and whitewashed the inside walls.

In 1873, Mattie wrote to her family in Indiana: "At Home in our own house, and a sod at that! . . . I suppose you would like to see us in our sod house. It is not quite so convenient as a nice frame, but I would as soon live in it as the cabins I have lived in. And then we are at home which makes it more comfortable." Some women hated the constant fight with insects, dirt, and leaky roofs. Others, like Mattie, were just happy to have a home that they owned. ■

Today, land-grant colleges make higher education widely accessible. Famous universities such as Michigan State and Texas A&M are at the forefront of technological research and innovation.

Incentives for Settlement

Major Stephen H. Long, an early visitor to the Great Plains, called the region "the Great American Desert." He believed the area was "unfit for cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence." A few decades later, with encouragement from the government, people began pouring onto the Plains to build farms.

New legislation Congress passed three acts in 1862 to turn public lands into private property. The **Homestead Act** allowed any head of household over the age of 21 to claim 160 acres of land. Each homesteader had to build a home on the land, make improvements, and farm the land for five years before being granted full ownership of the land by the government. Nearly 2 million people applied for land claims under this act. Most of the best land awarded under the Homestead Act was claimed before 1900, but the last homesteader received land in 1988.

The **Pacific Railway Act** of 1862 gave land to railroad companies to encourage the construction of railroad and telegraph lines. The **Morrill Act**, also passed by Congress in 1862, gave land to the states to provide colleges for

"agriculture and the mechanic arts." Not all states actually built colleges on the land they received. Instead, many sold the land and used the proceeds to fund education. The Morrill Act was significant because it was the first time the federal government provided assistance for higher education.

Railroads encourage settlement Railroad companies lured settlers to the West. Within a few years of the passage of the Pacific Railway Act, the federal government had given the railroads some 125 million acres of public land. State and local governments had given nearly 100 million more acres.

Railroad companies reaped profits by selling some of the land to settlers. They placed ads in eastern newspapers, as well as in Europe, singing the praises of the American West. In the early 1900s railroads advertised that Montana was a farmer's paradise. In response to the ads, some 40,000 homestead claims were filed in Montana between 1906 and 1918, making it the favorite destination of homesteaders.

The Oklahoma Land Run of 1889 By the 1870s, treaties had resulted in the relocation of a number of Native American nations to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). In

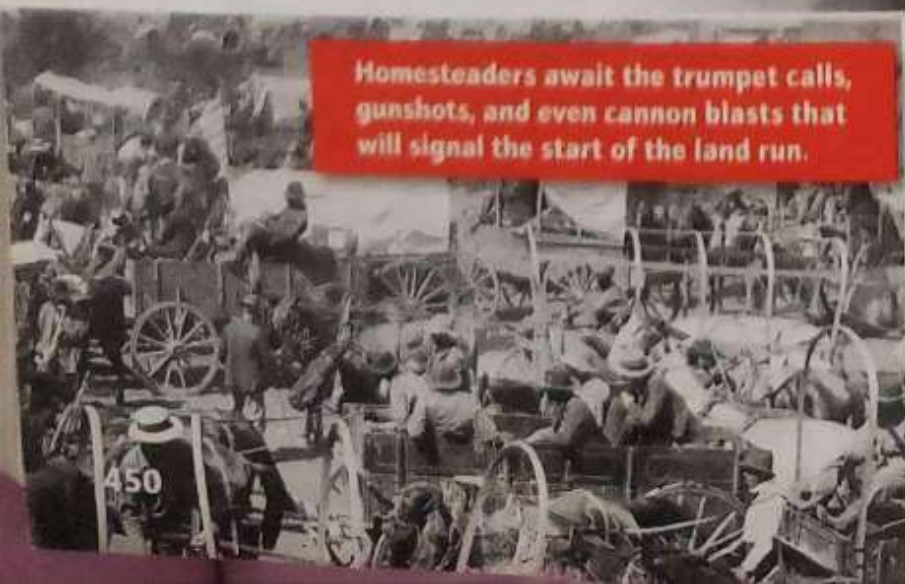
HISTORY CLOSE-UP

Oklahoma Land Rush

Between 1889 and 1895, five land runs drew thousands of new settlers to Oklahoma. The largest land run occurred in 1893. Settlers claimed seven million acres of land in an area known as the Cherokee Outlet on September 16, 1893.

Around 100,000 settlers rushed to claim land in the Cherokee Outlet.

Homesteaders await the trumpet calls, gunshots, and even cannon blasts that will signal the start of the land run.



1879, however, a Cherokee activist discovered that some 2 million acres in central Oklahoma had not been assigned to any nation. For 10 years settlers tried to move into these unassigned lands, despite presidential proclamations forbidding unlawful entry into Indian Territory. By the late 1880s, however, a political movement arose to open this area, and in 1889, it was opened to settlers.

On April 22, 1889, thousands of eager settlers lined up along the perimeter of these unassigned lands. At noon, federal troops gave the signal, and some 50,000 people rushed into the Oklahoma interior to stake their claim. A magazine described the founding of one town:

HISTORY'S VOICES

"The city of Guthrie was built in . . . an afternoon. At twelve o'clock on Monday, April 22nd, the resident population of Guthrie was nothing; before sundown it was at least ten thousand. In that time streets had been laid out, town lots staked off, and steps taken toward the formation of a municipal government. At twilight the campfires of ten thousand people gleamed on the grassy slopes of the Cimarron Valley, where, the night before, the coyote, the gray wolf, and the deer had roamed undisturbed."

—William Willard Howard, *Harper's Weekly*, May 1889

Between 1889 and 1895, five different land runs brought countless settlers to live in Oklahoma. Not everyone who rushed there to claim land was fully prepared to settle, however. Some arrived with few provisions and no money. Many hopeful settlers became quickly discouraged and left once they realized they could not survive until the next year's crops came in.

Closing of the frontier For decades the U.S. Census Bureau had monitored the extent of American settlement. The frontier, according to the bureau, existed at a point where the population totaled fewer than 2 people per square mile.

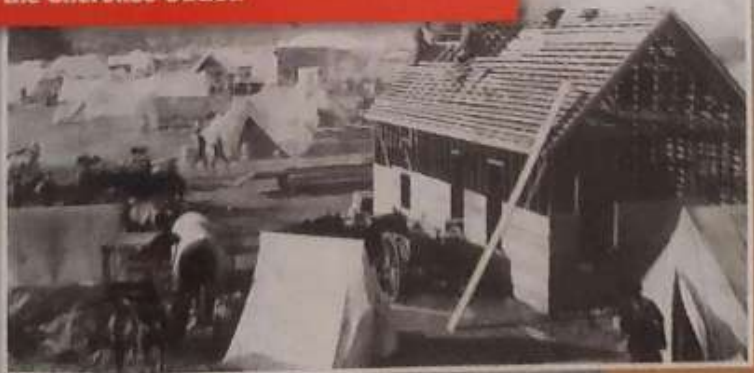
In 1890 the Census Bureau issued a momentous report. It stated that "at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line." In simpler terms, the federal government had declared the frontier closed.

The historian **Frederick Jackson Turner** seized on the news. Jackson believed that the existence of the frontier had made the United States distinctive. He explained his frontier thesis in an 1893 essay.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

thesis proposition put forth for argument

Like many frontier towns, Perry, Oklahoma, began to emerge within days of the opening of the Cherokee Outlet.



Skills Focus

INTERPRETING VISUALS

Chaotic settlement patterns led to some conflicts between homesteaders and the people known as boomers and sooners. These were people who staked claims before the territory was legally opened to settlers.

Making Inferences What other types of conflicts do you think might have arisen in the land rush?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H7

HISTORY'S VOICES

“Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession [moving back], and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.”

—Frederick Jackson Turner

For more than a century, historians debated Turner's idea. Today most dispute it. Some point to other factors—such as slavery, immigration, and industrialization—as being more important to the country's development. Others question whether the term *frontier* should even apply to an area that was already inhabited by Native Americans.

READING CHECK

Summarizing What did the Homestead Act do?

Migrating West

After the Civil War, most of the people moving West belonged to one of three major groups: white Americans from the East, African Americans from the South, and immigrants from foreign countries.

White settlers Most of the white settlers who moved West came from states in the Mississippi Valley, which had once been the frontier. So many people had moved to those states that cheap land was getting difficult to

FACES OF HISTORY

Benjamin SINGLETON

1809–1892



Born in Nashville, Tennessee, Benjamin Singleton escaped slavery and settled in the North. There, he protected runaway

slaves. After the Civil War, Singleton returned to Tennessee determined to help the newly freed African Americans there purchase farmland. But white landowners refused to sell their land at fair prices.

Singleton found an answer. He established settlements in Kansas and encouraged former slaves to move west. Thousands did. These former slaves became known as Exodusters. The exodus peaked in 1879 two years after Reconstruction ended. Later in life, Singleton unsuccessfully tried to help resettle African Americans in Africa.

Sequence What steps did Singleton take to try to help African Americans gain better lives?

find. Still, those who went west were mostly middle-class farmers or businesspeople. They could afford the money for supplies and transportation.

African American settlers In the late 1870s, African Americans began a massive migration west. Some were inspired by the words of Benjamin “Pap” Singleton, a community builder and former slave who urged African Americans to build their own communities in the West. Others fled because of violence and oppression in the South. The withdrawal of federal troops from the South in 1877 led to segregation laws and violent attacks from groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

Rumors soon spread throughout the South that the federal government would set aside Kansas for former slaves. The rumor turned out to be false, but some 15,000 African Americans moved to Kansas within the year in search of a peaceful life. The settlers became known as **Exodusters**. Tens of thousands of these Exodusters left the South and settled in Kansas, Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois.

European settlers The lure of economic opportunity brought thousands of Europeans to the west. Scandinavians from Sweden, Norway, and Finland poured onto the northern Plains in the 1870s, seeking farmland. Many Irish who had come to help build the railroads decided to stay and settle on the Plains. Many Russian Mennonites, members of a Protestant religious sect, brought their experience of farming on the Russian steppes, or grasslands, to the Great Plains. Huge numbers of Germans came to the United States as well. Many moved to the central part of Texas, creating a distinctive culture in that area.

Chinese settlers By the 1880s some of the Chinese immigrants who had come for the California gold rush or to build railroads had turned to farming, especially in California. Those who had experience as farmers in China introduced innovative techniques, helping to establish California's fruit industry. Although some Chinese farmed their own land, most ended up as farm laborers, usually because of laws that barred Chinese from owning land.

READING CHECK

Drawing Conclusions Why did European immigrants move to the West?

New Ways of Farming

The journey west was expensive and full of hardships. But once farmers staked a claim on a homestead, they faced new challenges.

First, the climate was harsh. Winters could be bitterly cold as snowstorms rushed down from Canada. Summers were fiercely hot, causing crops to shrivel and die.

Water was scarce, forcing farmers to dig wells and install windmill-driven pumps. In the Southwest, some settlers used Hispanic and Native American irrigation techniques. Their farms stretched out in strips from water sources so that each would have water access.

Without lumber to build houses, many settlers used the earth itself. Some early settlers built **dugouts**, shelters dug into the sides of hills. They soon replaced dugouts with sturdy sod houses.

Farming in a new environment New kinds of farming equipment helped farmers meet the challenge of farming on the Plains. James Oliver developed a new plow with a sharper edge that helped Plains farmers plow their fields with much less effort. Machines called combine harvesters cut wheat, separated the grains from the stalks, and removed the husks from the grains all in one operation. Such equipment was expensive, and many small farmers went into debt to buy it.

Challenges for Farmers

QUICK
FACTS

- **Harsh climate:** from bitter snowstorms to fierce heat and drought
- **Scarce water:** low rainfall and few rivers
- **Lumber shortage:** few wood sources for home-building or heating

Pumps powered by windmills drew water from deep underground.



Farming as big business Large companies soon saw a business opportunity on the Plains. They created giant **bonanza farms**. These farms operated like factories, with expensive machinery, professional managers, and laborers who performed specialized tasks.

Owners of bonanza farms reaped great profits during good growing seasons. During bad growing seasons, they struggled to maintain equipment and pay workers. Small family farmers with fewer expenses often handled the boom-and-bust cycles better than the big companies. By the 1890s, most bonanza farms had been broken up.

READING CHECK

Identifying Problems and

Solutions How did farmers deal with the harsh environment of the Great Plains?

SECTION

3

ASSESSMENT

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Online Quiz

Keyword: SD7 HP13

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

1. **a. Define** Write a brief definition of the following terms:
Homestead Act, Pacific Railway Act, Morrill Act
b. Evaluate Do you think the West would have been settled as quickly without U.S. government incentives? Explain.
2. **a. Identify** Which groups of people decided to move West?
b. Explain Why did the **Exodusters** leave the South, and why did they choose to move to Kansas?
c. Predict Which kinds of people do you think would be most successful in establishing a new farm on the Plains?
3. **a. Recall** What factors made farming different in the West than in the East?
b. Compare and Contrast How were **dugouts** and **sod houses** similar? How were they different?
c. Evaluate How did farmers adapt their lives because of the scarcity of resources?

Critical Thinking

4. **Comparing** How did the government and the railroads promote settlement in the West?

Government	Railroads

FOCUS ON WRITING

5. **Descriptive** Suppose you and your family are living on the prairie. Write a letter to your friend back East describing the challenges of living in a sod house.