



UNIT 7

Reshaping the Nation

1858–1914

Why It Matters

As you study Unit 7, you will learn that pioneers continued to spread across the continent, and immigrants flocked to industrial centers. The following resources offer more information about this period in American history.

Primary Sources Library

See pages 970–971 for primary source readings to accompany Unit 7.



Use the **American History**

Primary Source Document Library

CD-ROM to find additional primary sources about the western frontier and the growth of industry.



Traveler's trunk



Hudson River by
Gari Melchers



*“America!
America! . . .
From sea to
shining sea!”*

—Katherine Lee Bates, 1893



◀ **CONTENTS** ▶



CHAPTER 18

The Western Frontier

1858–1896

Why It Matters

Many Native American nations lived on the Great Plains, along with the buffalo herds that were their primary source of food. Then, beginning in 1869, transcontinental railroad lines opened the West for white settlers, forever changing the Native American way of life.

The Impact Today

Settlement of the Great Plains came along with the development of machines for plowing, planting, and harvesting. This combination still makes the Midwest a leader in supplying meat and grain to the world.



The American Journey Video The chapter 18 video, “Life on the Western Frontier,” explores what life in the West was like for cowhands and Native Americans.



1862

- Homestead Act passed

1876

- Battle of Little Bighorn



United States

PRESIDENTS

Buchanan
1857–1861



Lincoln
1861–1865



A. Johnson
1865–1869



Grant
1869–1877



Hayes
1877–1881



1860

1870

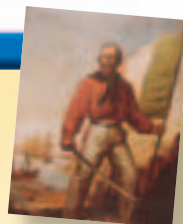
1880



World

1861

- Italians establish a united kingdom



1869

- Suez Canal opens

1871

- Stanley and Livingstone meet in Africa

FOLDABLES™

Study Organizer

Evaluating Information Study Foldable

Make this foldable to organize information and ask yourself questions as you read about the western frontier of the United States.

Step 1 Fold a sheet of paper in half from side to side, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tab along the side.



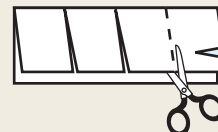
Leave $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tab here.

Step 2 Turn the paper and fold it into fourths.



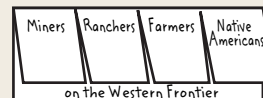
Fold in half, then fold in half again.

Step 3 Unfold and cut up along the three fold lines.



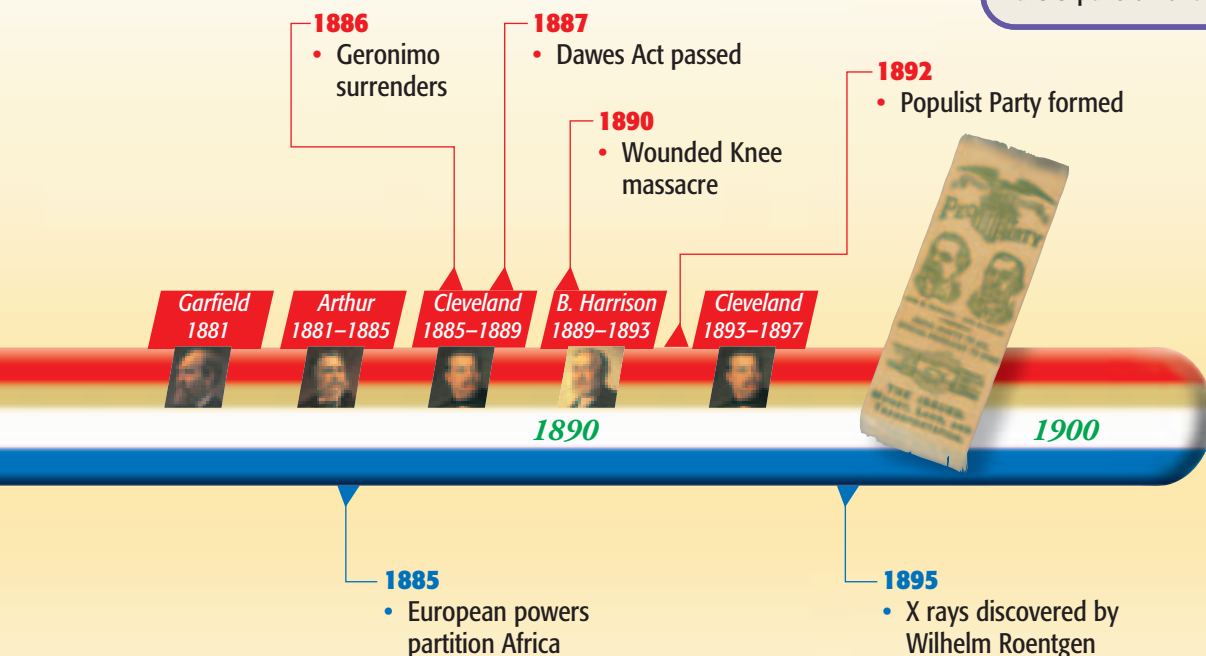
Make four tabs.

Step 4 Label your foldable as shown.



Reading and Writing As you read the chapter, ask yourself and write down questions (under each appropriate tab) about the tragedies and triumphs these four groups of people experienced during the expansion of the western frontier.

The Race by Mort Künstler The artist is well known for realistic portrayals of dramatic events in American history.



HISTORY Online

Chapter Overview

Visit taj.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 18—Chapter Overviews** to pre-view chapter information.

CLICK HERE



SECTION 1 The Mining Booms

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

Discoveries of gold and silver drew thousands of fortune seekers to the West.

Key Terms

lode, ore, vigilante, ghost town, subsidy, transcontinental

Reading Strategy

Analyzing Information As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and explain why these places were significant to the mining boom.

	Significance
Pikes Peak	
Comstock Lode	
Promontory Point	

Read to Learn

- how the rush to find gold and silver led to the growth of new communities in the West.
- how development of the railroads affected the nation.

Section Theme

Geography and History Rail lines and mining speeded the flow of settlers to the West.

Preview of Events

♦ 1855

♦ 1865

♦ 1875

♦ 1885

1858

Gold is discovered at Pikes Peak

1869

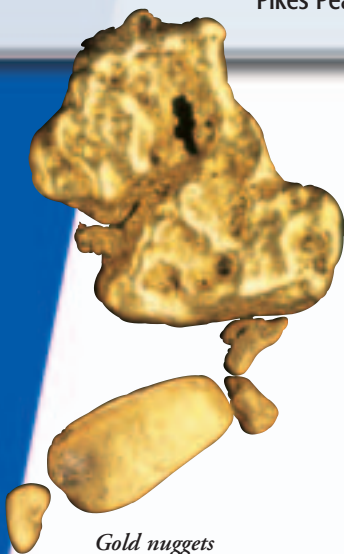
Transcontinental railroad links East and West

1876

Colorado joins the Union

1883

Nation is divided into four time zones



Gold nuggets

AN American Story

*"We'll cross the bold Missouri, and we'll steer for the West,
And we'll take the road we think is the shortest and the best,
We'll travel over plains where the wind is blowing bleak,
And the sandy wastes shall echo with—Hurrah for Pikes Peak."*

—*"The Gold Seeker's Song"*

Miners sang this hopeful song in 1859 as they headed for Pikes Peak, Colorado, where gold had been discovered.



Mining Is Big Business

By the mid-1850s the California Gold Rush had ended. Disappointed miners, still hoping to strike it rich, began prospecting in other parts of the West.

In 1858 a mining expedition found gold on the slopes of **Pikes Peak** in the Colorado Rockies. Newspapers claimed that miners were making \$20 a day panning for gold—a large sum at a time when servants made less than a dollar



a day. By the spring of 1859, about 50,000 prospectors had flocked to Colorado. Their slogan was “Pikes Peak or Bust.”

Prospectors skimmed gold dust from streams or scratched particles of gold from the surface of the land. Most of the gold, however, was deep in underground **lodes**, rich streaks of ore sandwiched between layers of rock. Mining this rock, or **ore**, and then extracting the gold required expensive machinery, many workers, and an organized business. Companies made up of several investors had a better chance of getting rich in the goldfields than individual miners did. At most gold rush sites, mining companies soon replaced the lone miner.

Gold and silver mining attracted foreign as well as American investors. The British, for example, invested heavily in the American mining industry.

The Comstock Lode

In 1859 several prospectors found a rich lode of silver-bearing ore on the banks of the Carson River in Nevada. The discovery was called the **Comstock Lode** after Henry Comstock, who owned a share of the claim.

Thousands of mines opened near the site, but only a few were profitable. Mining companies reaped the largest share of the profits. When Comstock sold his share of the claim, he received \$11,000 and two mules—a huge sum at the time. It was, however, just a tiny fraction of the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of gold and silver pulled from the Comstock Lode strike.

 **Reading Check** **Describing** What was the Comstock Lode?



The Mining Frontier

The gold strikes created **boomtowns**—towns that grew up almost overnight around mining sites. The Comstock boomtown was **Virginia City, Nevada**. In 1859 the town was a mining camp. Two years later it had a stock exchange, hotels, banks, an opera company, and five newspapers.

Boomtowns were lively, and often lawless, places filled with people from far-off regions. Gold and silver strikes attracted eager prospectors from Mexico, China, and other countries.

Money came quickly—and was often lost just as quickly through extravagant living and gambling. A fortunate miner could earn as much as \$2,000 a year, about four times the annual salary of a teacher at that time. Still food, lodging, clothing, and other goods cost dearly in the boomtowns, draining the miners' earnings.

Violence was part of everyday life in boomtowns, where many people carried large amounts of cash and guns. Cheating and stealing were common. Few boomtowns had police or prisons, so citizens sometimes took the law into their own hands. These **vigilantes** dealt out their own brand of justice without benefit of judge or jury, often hanging the accused person from the nearest tree.

Women in the Boomtowns

Boomtowns were largely men's towns in the early days. Men outnumbered women by two to one in Virginia City, and children made up less than 10 percent of the population.

Eager to share in the riches of the boomtowns, some women opened businesses. Others worked as laundresses, cooks, or dance-hall entertainers. Women often added stability to the boomtowns, founding schools and churches and working to make the communities safer and more orderly.

Boom and Bust

Many mining “booms” were followed by “busts.” When the mines no longer yielded ore, people left the towns. At its peak in the 1870s, Virginia City had about 30,000 inhabitants. By 1900 its population had dropped below 4,000.



The boomtown of Leadville, Colorado, surrounds a settler's cabin that sits in the middle of the main street.

Many boomtowns turned into **ghost towns**—deserted as prospectors moved on to more promising sites or returned home. Some ghost towns still exist in the West today, as reminders of the glory days of the mining frontier.

Mining Expands

Toward the end of the rush, gold and silver mining in some places gave way to the mining of other metals. Copper became the key metal found in Montana, New Mexico, and Arizona in the 1870s.

In the 1890s people began mining lead and zinc in some of the former silver-mining towns of Colorado. Finally, the mining frontier became part of American industry, providing raw materials for manufacturers.

New States Enter the Union

Many people who went west to seek their fortunes in gold or silver settled there permanently. Frontier areas around the boomtowns eventually became states. Colorado joined the United States in 1876. North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, and Montana became states in 1889. Wyoming and Idaho were admitted to the Union in 1890.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** Why did many boomtowns turn into ghost towns?

Railroads Connect East and West

The western mines operated far from the industrial centers of the East and Midwest. For this reason transportation played a vital role in the survival of mining communities. Gold and silver had little value unless they could reach factories, ports, and markets. At the same time, the miners and others in the boomtowns needed shipments of food and other supplies.

Wagon trains and stagecoach lines could not move people and goods fast enough to meet these demands. Railroads could—and did. The nation's railroad network expanded rapidly between 1865 and 1890. During that period the miles of track in the United States soared from about 35,000 to more than 150,000.

Government and the Railroads

Railroad construction was often supported by large government **subsidies**—financial aid and land grants from the government. Railroad executives made the argument that their companies should receive free public land on which to lay track because a rail network would benefit the entire nation.

The national government and states agreed. In all, the federal government granted more than 130 million acres of land to the railroad



companies. Much of the land was purchased or obtained by treaties from Native Americans. The government grants included the land for the tracks plus strips of land along the railway, 20 to 80 miles wide. Railroad companies sold those strips of land to raise additional money for construction costs.

States and local communities also helped the railroads. Towns offered cash subsidies to make sure that the railroads came to their communities. For example, Los Angeles gave the Southern Pacific Railroad money and paid for a passenger terminal to ensure that the railroad would come to the town.

Spanning the Continent

The search for a route for a **transcontinental** rail line—one that would span the continent and connect the Atlantic and Pacific coasts—began in the 1850s. Southerners wanted the route to run

through the South, and Northerners through the North. During the Civil War, the Union government chose a northerly route. The government offered land grants to railroad companies willing to build the transcontinental line.

The challenge was enormous—laying track for more than 1,700 miles across hot plains and through rugged mountains. Two companies accepted the challenge. The Union Pacific Company began laying track westward from Omaha, Nebraska, while the Central Pacific Company worked eastward from Sacramento, California.

The two companies competed fiercely. Each wanted to cover a greater distance in order to receive more of the government subsidies.

The Central Pacific hired about 10,000 Chinese laborers to work on its tracks. The first Chinese were hired in 1865 at about \$28 per month. The Union Pacific relied on Irish and African American workers. All workers toiled

TECHNOLOGY & History

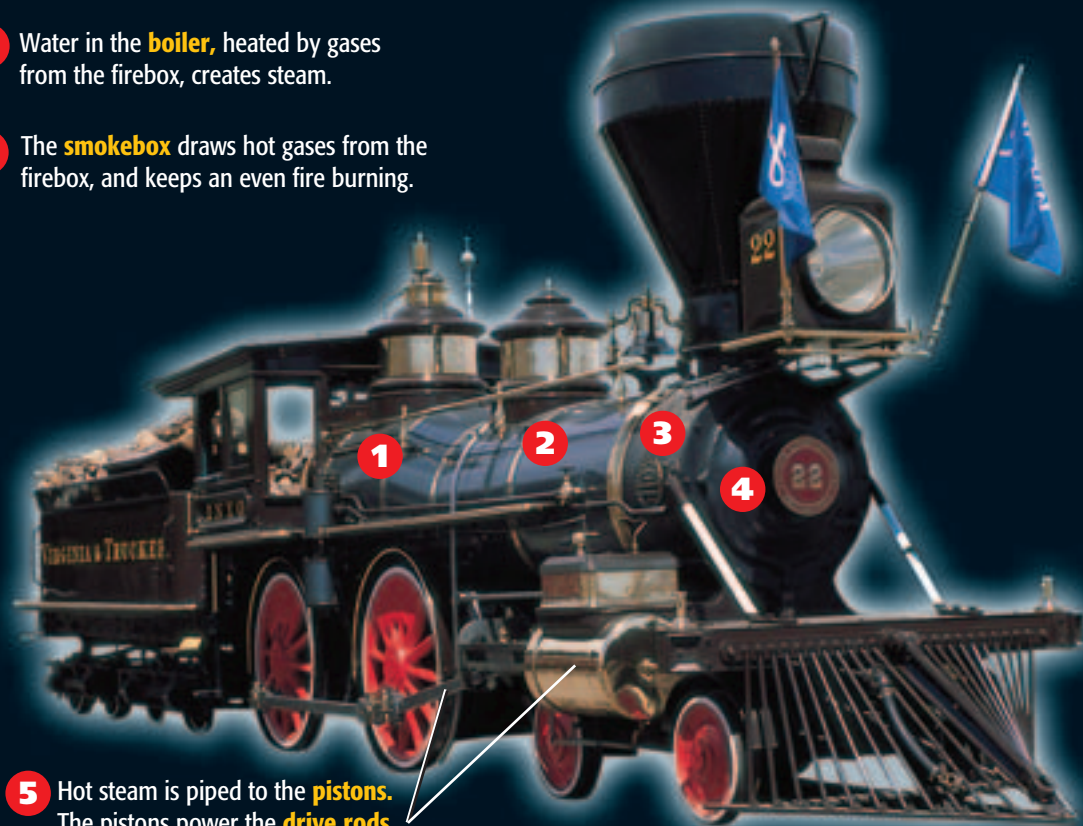
Steam Locomotive

Since 1825, when the first steam locomotive was built in the United States, trains have crisscrossed the country. As America's transportation needs increased, so did the miles of railroad track linking its people.

Why do you think steam power was the first power source for locomotives?



- 1 The **firebox** burns coal, wood, or sometimes oil.
- 2 Water in the **boiler**, heated by gases from the firebox, creates steam.
- 3 The **smokebox** draws hot gases from the firebox, and keeps an even fire burning.
- 4 In the **steam header tank**, the heated steam expands and creates great pressure.



- 5 Hot steam is piped to the **pistons**. The pistons power the **drive rods** which in turn push the **drive wheels**.

◀ CONTENTS ▶



for low wages in harsh conditions. In the choking heat of summer and the icy winds of winter, they cleared forests, blasted tunnels through mountains, and laid hundreds of miles of track. In the end the Union Pacific workers laid 1,038 miles of track, and the Central Pacific workers laid 742 miles. However, the Central Pacific covered a much harsher terrain.

The Transcontinental Railway

On May 10, 1869, construction was completed. A Chinese crew was chosen to lay the final ten miles of track, which was completed in only twelve hours. The two sets of track met at **Promontory Point** in Utah Territory. **Leland Stanford**, governor of California, drove a final golden spike into a tie to join the two railroads. Almost as the event occurred, telegraph lines flashed the news across the country:

“The last rail is laid . . . the last spike driven.
 . . . The Pacific Railroad is completed.”

Economics

Effects of the Railroads

By 1883 two more transcontinental lines and dozens of shorter lines connected cities in the West with the rest of the nation. The economic

consequences were enormous. The railroads brought thousands of workers to the West. Trains carried metals and produce east and manufactured goods west. As more tracks were laid, more steel was needed, and the demand boosted the nation's steel industry. Coal producers, railroad car manufacturers, and construction companies also flourished as the railroads spread across the West.

Towns sprang up along the rail lines that carried the settlers' agricultural goods to market. Some of these towns eventually grew into large cities such as Denver, Colorado. The railroads also brought the next wave of new settlers to the West—cattle ranchers and farmers.

Railroads even changed how people measured time. Before railroads, each community kept its own time. Clocks in Boston, for example, were 11 minutes ahead of clocks in New York. The demand for sensible train schedules, however, changed that. In 1883 the railroad companies divided the country into four **time zones**. All communities in each zone would share the same time, and each zone was exactly one hour apart from the zones on either side of it. Congress passed a law making this practice official in 1918.

✓ Reading Check Identifying To what California city did the transcontinental railroad extend?

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- 1. Key Terms** Explain why each of these terms is used in a section about mining and the railroads: **lode, ore, vigilante, ghost town, subsidy, transcontinental.**
- 2. Reviewing Facts** Describe life in a typical boomtown.

Reviewing Themes

- 3. Geography and History** What physical features and climates made building the transcontinental railroad difficult?

Critical Thinking

- 4. Drawing Conclusions** Some boomtowns thrived after the mining boom, while others became ghost towns. Why do you think some towns survived while others did not?
- 5. Determining Cause and Effect** Re-create the diagram below and explain how railroads helped open the West to settlement.



Analyzing Visuals

- 6. Picturing History** Look at the diagram of the steam locomotive on page 531. What is the purpose of the firebox? How were the drive wheels set in operation?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Geography Draw a freehand outline map of the United States today. Shade in the area covered by the states that came into being during the period of the mining boom.



Social Studies SKILLBUILDER

Reading a Special-Purpose Map

Why Learn This Skill?

Maps that show information on specialized subjects, or themes, are called special-purpose maps. They differ from general-purpose maps in that they show more than basic physical features or political boundaries. Special-purpose maps can contain physical, economic, climatic, historic, or cultural information—almost anything that can be expressed geographically.

Learning the Skill

Begin by reading the map title and labels to determine the subject and purpose of the map. Then study the map key. Identify each symbol and color shown in the key and locate these on the map. Use this information to look for similarities and differences in the region shown on the map.



Practicing the Skill

Look at the map of Western Land Use, 1890. Then answer the following questions.

- 1 What is the subject of the map?
- 2 What do the colors represent?
- 3 What are the most common uses of land in Texas?
- 4 What were the uses of land in Montana? In Nebraska?

Applying the Skill

Reading a Special-Purpose Map Look at the map on page 544. Where were Native American reservations placed in relation to productive ranching and farming land in 1890?



Glencoe's **Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook CD-ROM, Level 1**, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.



SECTION 2

Ranchers and Farmers

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

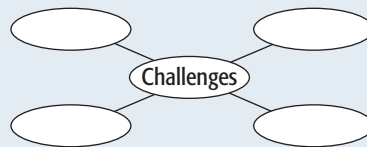
Following the Civil War, settlers began to move west in great number.

Key Terms

open range, brand, vaquero, homestead, sodbuster, dry farming

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and list the challenges settlers faced on the Great Plains.



Read to Learn

- how the railroads helped create a “Cattle Kingdom” in the Southwest.
- how women contributed to the settling of the Great Plains.

Section Theme

Economic Factors Ranchers and farmers had to overcome many difficulties to make a profit.

Preview of Events

1860

1862

Homestead Act gives free land to settlers

1870

1865

Missouri Pacific Railroad reaches Missouri

1880

1880

Railroad extends from Kansas to Santa Fe

1890

1889

Oklahoma land rush occurs



Cattle-branding iron

AN American Story

An old Texas cowhand, E.C. Abbott, recalled the early days of riding the trail: “Here [were] all these cheap long-horned steers overrunning Texas; here was the rest of the country crying for beef—and no railroads to get them out. So we trailed them out, across hundreds of miles of wild country that was thick with Indians. . . . In 1867 the town of Abilene was founded at the end of the Kansas Pacific Railroad and that was when the trail really started.”

Cattle on the Plains

When the Spanish settled Mexico and Texas, they brought a tough breed of cattle with them. Called **longhorns** because of their prominent horns, these cattle gradually spread across Texas.

At this time much of Texas was **open range**—not fenced or divided into lots. Huge ranches covered other areas of the state. Ranchers added to their own herds by rounding up wild cattle. The ranchers burned a **brand**, or symbol, into the animals’ hides to show who owned the cattle.



Railroads and Cow Towns

Although Texas ranchers had plenty of cattle, the markets for beef were in the North and the East. In 1866 the Missouri Pacific Railroad reached Missouri, and Texas cattle suddenly increased in value. The cattle could be loaded onto trains in Missouri for shipment north and east. Some Texans drove their combined herds—sometimes 260,000 head of cattle—north to **Sedalia, Missouri**, the nearest rail point. Longhorns that had formerly been worth \$3 each quickly rose in value to \$40.

Cattle drives to **cow towns**—towns located near railroads to market and ship cattle—turned into a yearly event. Over the next decade, cow towns such as **Abilene** and **Dodge City, Kansas**, and **Cheyenne, Wyoming**, became important rail stations.

★ Geography

The Long Drive

The sudden increase in the longhorns' value set off what became known as the **Long Drive**—the herding of cattle 1,000 miles or more to meet the railroads. The drives left Texas in the spring, when there was enough grass along the way to

feed the cattle. The longhorns had to remain well fed because underweight cattle could not be sold.

Some of the largest Long Drives led from central Texas to Abilene, Kansas, on the **Chisholm Trail**. The **Goodnight-Loving Trail**, named for ranchers Charlie Goodnight and Oliver Loving, swung west through the New Mexico Territory and then turned north. During the heyday of the “Cattle Kingdom,” from the late 1860s to the mid-1880s, the trails carried more than five million cattle north.

✓ **Reading Check Explaining** Why did the value of cattle increase in the mid-1860s?

Life on the Trail

The cattle drives and the cowhands who worked on them captured the imagination of the nation. Cattle driving, however, was hard work. Cowhands rode in the saddle up to 15 hours every day, in driving rain, dust storms, and blazing sun. Life on the trail was lonely too. Cowhands saw few outsiders.

History Through Art

Jerked Down by Charles Russell Celebrated for his detailed and dramatic scenes of Western life, Charles Russell depicts cowhands on their surefooted horses lassoing cattle. **Where did the traditions of cattle herding begin?**





Spanish Influence

Many cowhands were veterans of the Confederate army. Some were African Americans who moved west in search of a better life after the Civil War. Others were Hispanics. In fact, the traditions of cattle herding began with Hispanic ranch hands in the Spanish Southwest. These **vaqueros** developed many of the skills—riding, roping, and branding—that cowhands used on the drives. Much of the language of the rancher today is derived from Spanish words used by vaqueros for centuries. Even the word *ranch* comes from the Spanish word *rancho*.

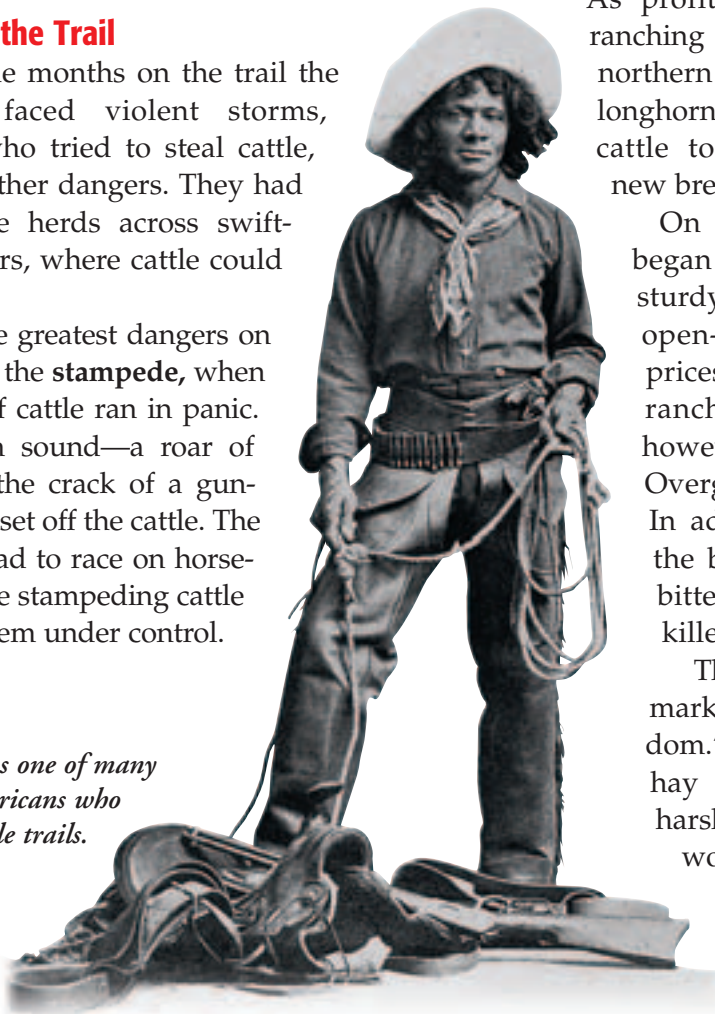
The cowhand's equipment was based on the vaquero's equipment too. Cowhands wore wide-brimmed hats to protect themselves from the sun and leather leggings, called **chaps**, to shield their legs from brush and mishaps with cattle. They used ropes called **lariats** to lasso cattle that strayed from the herd.

Hazards on the Trail

During the months on the trail the cowhands faced violent storms, “rustlers” who tried to steal cattle, and many other dangers. They had to drive the herds across swift-flowing rivers, where cattle could be lost.

One of the greatest dangers on the trail was the **stampede**, when thousands of cattle ran in panic. Any sudden sound—a roar of thunder or the crack of a gunshot—could set off the cattle. The cowhands had to race on horseback with the stampeding cattle and bring them under control.

Nat Love was one of many African Americans who rode the cattle trails.



The “Wild West”

African American, Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo cowhands all met and worked together. Yet discrimination existed in the West just as it did elsewhere in the nation. Members of minorities rarely became trail bosses and often received less pay for their work. Some towns discriminated against Hispanics, segregated African Americans, and excluded Chinese cowhands altogether.

After many tiring weeks on the trail, the cowhands delivered their cattle and enjoyed some time off in cow towns. Cowhands drank and gambled, and got involved in fistfights and gunplay. Some towns, such as Dodge City and Abilene, were rowdy, lawless, and often violent. Eventually, though, they grew into settled, businesslike communities.

The Cattle Kingdom Ends

As profits from cattle increased, cattle ranching spread north from Texas. On the northern Plains, ranchers crossbred the longhorns with fatter Hereford and Angus cattle to produce hardy and plumper new breeds.

On the northern Plains, ranching began to replace the Long Drive. The sturdy crossbred cattle multiplied on open-range ranches. When cattle prices “boomed” in the early 1880s, ranchers became rich. The boom, however, was soon followed by a bust. Overgrazing depleted the grasslands. In addition, too many cattle glutted the beef market and prices fell. The bitterly cold winters of 1885 and 1886 killed large numbers of cattle.

The price collapse of the mid-1880s marked the end of the “Cattle Kingdom.” Ranchers built fences and grew hay to feed their cattle during the harsh winters. Another type of life would rise on the Plains—farming.

Reading Check Describing

Who were the vaqueros?



On the Great Plains To survive on the Plains, settlers had to build houses that did not require lumber on this treeless land. A Plains family's first home was usually made of sod, rectangular pieces of soil and grass.



Farmers Settle the Plains

The early pioneers who reached the Great Plains did not believe they could farm the dry, treeless area. In the late 1860s, however, farmers began settling there and planting crops. In a surprisingly short time, much of the Plains changed from “wilderness” to farmland. In 1872 a Nebraska settler wrote,

“One year ago this was a vast houseless, uninhabited prairie. . . . Today I can see more than thirty dwellings from my door.”

Several factors brought settlers to the Plains. The railroads made the journey west easier and cheaper. New laws offered free land. Finally, above-average rainfall in the late 1870s made the Plains better suited to farming.

The Homestead Act

In 1862 Congress passed the **Homestead Act**, which gave 160 free acres of land to a settler who paid a filing fee and lived on the land for five years. This federal land policy brought farmers to the Plains to **homestead**—earn ownership of land by settling on it.

Homesteading lured thousands of new settlers. Some were immigrants who had begun the process of becoming American citizens and were eligible to file for land. Others were women. Although married women could not claim land, single women and widows had the same rights as men—and they used the Homestead Act to acquire property. In Colorado and Wyoming, 12 percent of all those who filed homestead claims were women.

Promoting the Plains

Homesteaders came to the Plains to own land and be independent. They were also swayed by advertising paid for by railroads, steamship companies, land speculators, and western states and territories.

Railroad companies wanted to sell the strips of land alongside the rail lines to raise cash. Steamship companies went to great lengths to advertise the American Plains in Scandinavia. By 1880 more than 100,000 Swedes and Norwe-



European immigrants on a railroad flatcar view land open for settlement on the Great Plains.

gians had settled in the northern Plains—Minnesota and the Dakotas. The Scandinavian influence remains strong in this region today.

African American Settlers

Thousands of African Americans also migrated from the Southern states into Kansas in the late 1870s. They called themselves “**Exodusters**,” from the biblical book of Exodus, which describes the Jews’ escape from slavery in Egypt.

The end of Reconstruction in 1877 had meant the end of federal protection for African Americans. Fearing for their safety in former slave regions, freed people sought land farther west. By 1881 more than 40,000 African Americans had migrated to Kansas. Some, however, had to return to the South because they lacked the money to start new farms or businesses.

★ Geography

The Farmers’ Frontier

The climate of the Plains presented farmers with their greatest challenge. Generally there was little rainfall, but in some years rain came down in torrents, destroying crops and flooding homesteads. The other extreme—drought—also threatened crops and lives. Fire was another enemy. In times of drought, brushfires swept rapidly through a region, destroying crops, livestock, and homes.

Summer might bring plagues of grasshoppers. Several times during the 1870s, swarms of the insects swept over the Plains. Thousands of grasshoppers would land on a field of corn. When they left, not a stalk would remain.

Winters presented even greater dangers. Winds howled across the open Plains, and deep snow could bury animals and trap families in their homes. Farm families had to plan ahead and store food for the winter.

Farm Families

Farming on the Great Plains was a family affair. Men labored hard in the fields. Women often did the same work, but they also cared for the children. A farm wife sewed clothing, made candles, and cooked and preserved food. In the absence of doctors and teachers, she also tended to the children’s health and education. When her husband was away—taking the harvest to town or buying supplies—she bore all responsibility for keeping the farm running.

When children grew old enough, they too worked the farm. Children helped in the fields, tended animals, and did chores around the house. Farmwork often kept children from attending school.

Although separated by great distances, farm families socialized whenever they could. People took great pleasure in getting together for



weddings, church services, picnics, and other occasions. As communities grew, schools and churches began to dot the rural landscape.

New Farming Methods

The Plains could not be farmed by the usual methods of the 1860s. Most parts of the region had little rainfall and too few streams for irrigation. The Plains farmers, known as **sodbusters**, needed new methods and tools.

One approach, called **dry farming**, was to plant seeds deep in the ground where there was some moisture. Wooden plows could not penetrate the tough layer of sod, but in the late 1870s farmers could use the newly invented light-weight steel plows to do the job.

The sodbusters had other tools to help them conquer the Plains—windmills to pump water from deep in the ground and a new fencing called **barbed wire**. With no wood to build fences, farmers used these wire fences to protect their land.

Dry farming, however, did not produce large crop yields, and the 160-acre grants were too small to make a living. Most farmers needed at least 300 acres, as well as advanced machinery, to make a Plains farm profitable. Many farmers went into debt. Others lost ownership of their farms and then had to rent the land.

The Oklahoma Land Rush

The last part of the Plains to be settled was the Oklahoma Territory, which Congress had designated as “Indian Territory” in the 1830s. In 1889, after years of pressure from land dealers and settlers’ groups, the federal government opened Oklahoma to homesteaders.

On the morning of April 22, 1889—the official opening day—more than 10,000 people lined up on the edge of this land. At the sound of a bugle, the homesteaders charged across the border to stake their claims. The eager **boomers**, as the homesteaders were called, discovered to their dismay that some settlers had already slipped into Oklahoma. These so-called **sooners** had already claimed most of the best land. Within a few years, all of Oklahoma was opened to settlement.

Closing the Frontier

Not long after the Oklahoma land rush, the government announced in the 1890 census that the frontier no longer existed. Settlement had changed the Plains dramatically. No one felt these changes more keenly than the Native Americans who had lived on the Plains for centuries.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** Why was the Homestead Act important to settlers?

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Key Terms** Use each of these terms in a sentence that will help explain its meaning: **open range**, **brand**, **vaquero**, **homestead**, **sodbuster**, **dry farming**.
- Reviewing Facts** Explain why cow towns developed.

Reviewing Themes

- Economic Factors** Discuss two developments that contributed to the collapse of the cattle industry during the mid-1880s.

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Information** What opportunities did settlement on the Plains provide for women and African Americans?
- Determining Cause and Effect** Re-create the diagram below and explain how the Homestead Act encouraged settlement of the Great Plains.



Analyzing Visuals

- Picturing History** Study the photographs that appear on page 537. What image of life on the Plains do the photographs depict? How would you describe the mood of the people?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Art Create a poster that the United States government might have used to encourage farmers to move west. Think about what would tempt you to move west if you were a farmer. Display your posters in class.



What were people's lives like in the past?

What—and whom—were people talking about? What did they eat? What did they do for fun? These two pages will give you some clues to everyday life in the U.S. as you step back in time with TIME Notebook.

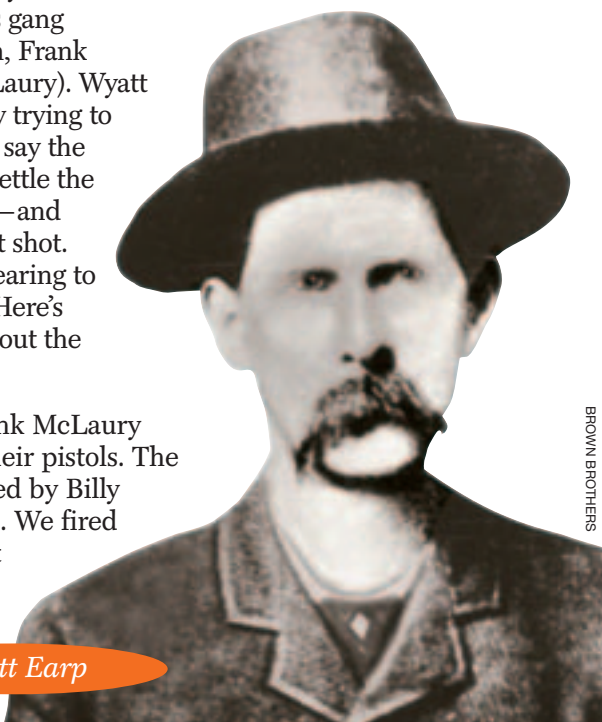
Profile

WYATT EARP *has been a buffalo hunter, a gambler, a con man, a bartender, and a legendary lawman. In Tombstone, Arizona, where his brother Virgil was sheriff, Wyatt served as a deputy U.S. marshal.*

IN OCTOBER 1881, A FEUD BETWEEN THE EARP FAMILY AND A GANG LED BY Ike Clanton led to one of the most famous gunfights of all time—the showdown at the O.K. Corral. The Earps and their friend Doc Holliday shot and killed three of Clanton's gang members (Billy Clanton, Frank McLaury and Tom McLaury). Wyatt claims they were simply trying to arrest the three. Others say the Earps used murder to settle the feud with the Clantons—and that Wyatt fired the first shot. Judge Spicer called a hearing to investigate the matter. Here's what Wyatt told him about the gunfight.

"Billy Clanton and Frank McLaury commenced to draw their pistols. The first two shots were fired by Billy Clanton and myself. . . . We fired almost together. I don't know which [gun] was fired first. . . ."

Wyatt Earp



BROWN BROTHERS

VERBATIM

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“We sat and looked as the lamp continued to burn, and the longer it burned, the more fascinated we were. None of us could go to bed. There was no sleep for any of us for 40 hours.”

THOMAS EDISON
on inventing the light bulb, which he patented in 1883



TIME PIX

“‘We the people’ does not mean ‘We the male citizens’.”

SUSAN B. ANTHONY,
crusader for women's rights in 1872

“Every time you stop a school, you will have to build a jail. What you gain at one end you lose at the other. It's like feeding a dog on his own tail. It won't fatten the dog.”

SAMUEL CLEMENS
(also known as Mark Twain)

“I asked a man in prison once how he happened to be there and he said he had stolen a pair of shoes. I told him if he had stolen a railroad, he would be a United States senator.”

“MOTHER” MARY JONES,
labor activist

The Eighth Wonder of the World

Sixteen years after the project began, the **Brooklyn Bridge**—the largest suspension bridge in the world—opens in 1883. Schools and shops in Brooklyn are closed so everyone can celebrate. President Chester Arthur is the first to walk across.

Hung from great steel cables, with a span half again as long as that of any previous bridge, it was designed and built by John Roebling. During the project, John was killed on the job. His son, Washington, continued directing the work until he himself was injured. Then Washington's wife Emily completed the job, making her possibly the first woman field engineer.



NORTH WIND PICTURES



MILESTONES

PEOPLE AND EVENTS OF THE TIME

1870 **LOUISA SWAIN**, age 70, casts a ballot in Wyoming and thus becomes the first woman in the U.S. to vote in a public election.

1871 Fire breaks out on October 8—by most accounts in Mrs. Patrick O’Leary’s barn—on Chicago’s West Side. Because of the city’s 651 miles of wooden sidewalks and 60,000 mostly wooden buildings, Chicago’s 200 firemen are unable to bring the blaze under control for 30 hours. In a city of about 300,000, some 100,000 are left homeless.



BROWN BROTHERS

Alexander
Graham Bell



NORTH WIND PICTURES

1876 In a building in Boston, **ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL** makes the first phone call—to Mr. Watson, his assistant upstairs. Bell’s message is simple: “Mr. Watson, come here. I want you!” Bell starts his own company because others dismiss the idea of the telephone as foolish. They see the telephone as just a toy.

1878 The first commercial telephone switchboard opens for business in New Haven, Connecticut. There are 21 subscribers.

NUMBERS

U.S. AT THE TIME

10,000 Number of people who watched the first Kentucky Derby in 1875



4 Number of time zones for the United States under 1883 system

5¢ Price for all the goods in F.W. Woolworth’s “Great Five-Cent Store” in Utica, New York (1879)

11 Number of days the stock exchange closes as a result of a panic on Wall Street in 1873

14,000 Number of deaths in southern states because of a yellow fever epidemic that raged in 1878

Western Words

Settlers of the western United States are learning some “new” words that come from Spanish.

mesa: an elevated, flat-topped piece of land

stampede: a wild rush of frightened animals

mesquite: wood of a spiny, southwestern tree or shrub sometimes used in cooking

pinto: a horse or pony that’s spotted with white and another color

lariat: lasso; a long rope with a noose used to catch livestock

corral: a pen or enclosure for holding livestock

The Well-Dressed Cowhand

These are prices from the Montgomery Ward catalogs of the 1880s.

Stetson hat	.....\$10.00
Leather vest	.....\$3.00
Cotton shirt (no collar)	.....\$1.25
Chaps and pants	.....\$8.00
Leather boots	.....\$20.00
Spurs	.....\$0.70
Raincoat	.....\$2.75
Winchester rifle	.....\$20.50
Colt pistol	.....\$12.20
Holster, cartridge belt	.....\$2.00
Horse (usually provided by ranch)	.....\$35.00
Saddle	.....\$40.00
Single-ear bridle	.....\$2.30
Lariat	.....\$7.75
Saddlebags	.....\$5.00





SECTION 3 Native American Struggles

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

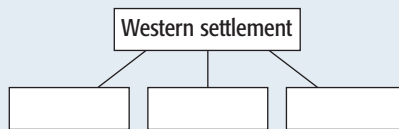
During the late 1800s, whites and Native Americans fought while Native Americans tried to preserve their civilizations.

Key Terms

nomadic, reservation

Reading Strategy

Determining Cause and Effect As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and describe how Western settlement affected Native Americans.



Read to Learn

- why the government forced Native Americans to move to reservations.
- how conflict between Native Americans and whites grew.

Section Theme

Culture and Traditions The settlement of white people in the West forced change on the Native Americans of the Plains.

Preview of Events



Native American
buffalo shield

AN American Story

In May 1876, George Crook led an army from the North Platte River to round up Native American bands. Sioux chief Crazy Horse urged on his warriors with the cry, "Come on Dakotas, it's a good day to die." The two sides fought until midafternoon. Then the Native Americans began to drift away. "They were tired and hungry, so they went home," one warrior later explained. The Native Americans retired to a large camp on the Little Bighorn River. Great leaders were there—Sitting Bull, Gall, Crazy Horse. A vast pony herd grazed nearby; the grass was green; there was dancing at night. . . .

Following the Buffalo

Starting in the mid-1850s, miners, railroads, cattle drives, and farmers came to the Plains. Each new group dealt another blow to Native Americans living there. The Sioux chief Red Cloud lamented,

“The white children [settlers] have surrounded me and left me nothing but an island.”



For centuries the Great Plains was home to many Native American nations. Some, like the Omaha and the Osage nations, lived in communities as farmers and hunters. Most of the Plains Indians, however, including the Sioux, the Comanche, and the Blackfeet, lived a **nomadic** life. They traveled vast distances following their main source of food—the great herds of buffalo that lived on the Great Plains.

Despite their differences, the people of the Plains were similar in many ways. Plains Indian nations, sometimes numbering several thousand people, were divided into bands consisting of up to 500 people each. A governing council headed each band, but most members participated in making decisions.

The women reared the children, cooked, and prepared hides. The men hunted, traded, and supervised the military life of the band. Most Plains Indians practiced a religion based on a belief in the spiritual power of the natural world.

Threats to the Buffalo

The Plains Indians had millions of buffalo to supply their needs. After the Civil War, though, American hunters hired by the railroads began

slaughtering the animals to feed the crews building the railroad. The railroad companies also wanted to prevent huge herds of buffalo from blocking the trains. William Cody, hired by the Kansas Pacific Railroad, once claimed that he had killed more than 4,000 buffalo in less than 18 months. He became known as Buffalo Bill. Starting in 1872 hunters targeted buffalo to sell the hides to the East, where tanneries made them into leather goods.

 **Reading Check** **Describing** What is a nomadic way of life?

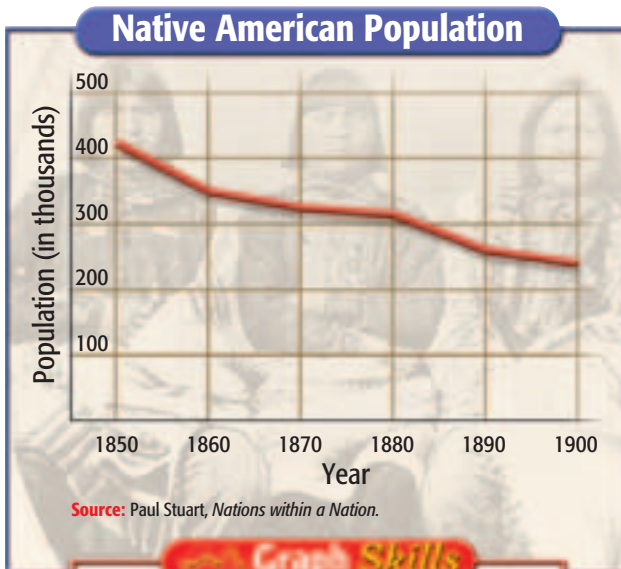
Conflict

As long as white people regarded the Plains as the “Great American Desert,” they left the Native Americans who lived there more or less alone. When whites began settling the Plains, the situation changed. In the late 1860s, the government tried a new Indian policy.

Reservation Policy

In 1867 the federal government appointed the Indian Peace Commission to develop a policy toward Native Americans. The commission recommended moving the Native Americans to a few large **reservations**—tracts of land set aside for them. Moving Native Americans to reservations was not a new policy, and the government now increased its efforts in that direction.

Native Americans of the Great Plains settled in one place for only part of the year.



Census figures show a declining Native American population before 1900.

Analyzing Information During what 10-year period did the Native American population decline the least?





Geography Skills

During the late 1800s, Native Americans and the United States Army fought many battles over land.

- 1. Location** In what state did the Battle of Little Bighorn take place?
- 2. Analyzing Information** Which Native American nations resettled in present-day Oklahoma?

One large reservation was in **Oklahoma**, the “Indian Territory” that Congress had created in the 1830s for Native Americans relocated from the Southeast. Another one, meant for the Sioux people, was in the **Dakota Territory**. Managing the reservations would be the job of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Government agents often used trickery to persuade Native American nations to move to the reservations. Many reservations were located on poor land. In addition the government often failed to deliver promised food and

supplies, and the goods that were delivered were of poor quality.

A great many Native Americans accepted the reservation policy at first. Many southern Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Arapaho agreed to stay on the Oklahoma reservation. Thousands of Sioux agreed to move onto the Dakota reservation in the North.

Pockets of resistance remained, however. Some Native Americans refused to make the move, and some who tried reservation life abandoned it. The stage was set for conflict.

Conflict on the Plains

During the 1860s, many armed clashes between Native Americans and whites took place. Minnesota Territory was the site of one especially bloody confrontation. Resentful of the



settlers, Sioux warriors, led by **Red Cloud**, burned and looted white settlers' homes in the summer of 1862. Hundreds died before troops arrived from St. Paul and put down the uprising.

Following the Minnesota uprising, the army sent patrols far out onto the northern Great Plains. This action brought troops into contact with another branch of the Sioux—the nomadic **Lakota**. The Lakota fought hard to keep control of their hunting grounds, which extended from the Black Hills and the surrounding Badlands—rocky and barren terrain in the western parts of the Dakotas and northwestern Nebraska—westward to the Bighorn Mountains.

The Sioux, along with Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors, staged a series of attacks from 1865 to 1867. The bloodiest incident occurred on December 21, 1866. Army troops were manning a fort on the Bozeman Trail, used by prospectors to reach gold mines in Montana. A Sioux military leader, **Crazy Horse**, acted as a decoy and lured the troops into a deadly trap. He tricked the fort's commander into sending a detachment of about 80 soldiers in pursuit. Hundreds of warriors were waiting in ambush and wiped out the entire detachment. This incident was known as the **Fetterman Massacre**.

Colorado was another site of conflict. The number of miners who had flocked to Colorado in search of gold and silver grew. Bands of Cheyenne and Arapaho began raiding wagon trains and stealing cattle and horses from ranches. By the summer of 1864, travelers heading to Denver or the mining camps were no longer safe. Dozens of ranches had been burned and an estimated 200 settlers had been killed. The territorial governor of Colorado ordered the Native Americans to surrender at Fort Lyon, where he said they would be given food and protection.

Although several hundred Native Americans surrendered at the fort, many others did not. In November 1864, Chief **Black Kettle** brought several hundred Cheyenne to negotiate a peace deal. They camped at Sand Creek. Shortly after, Colonel John Chivington led the Colorado Volunteers on an attack on the unsuspecting Cheyenne. Fourteen volunteers and hundreds of

Cheyenne died. Retaliation by the Cheyenne was swift, provoking widespread uprisings before some of the Cheyenne and Arapaho leaders agreed to stop the fighting in October 1865.

Little Bighorn

An 1868 treaty was supposed to bring peace, but tensions remained and erupted in more fighting a few years later.

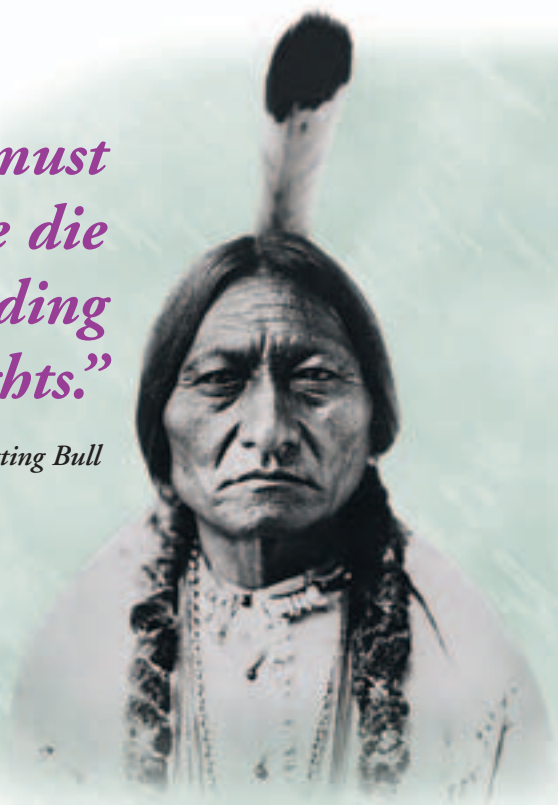
This time the conflict arose over the **Black Hills** of the Dakotas. The government had promised that “No white person or persons shall be permitted to settle upon or occupy” or even “to pass through” these hills. However, the hills were rumored to contain gold. In 1874 Custer led an army expedition to check on the rumors and confirmed that there was gold, “from the grass roots down.” Prospectors swarmed into the area.

The Sioux protested against the trespassers. Instead of protecting the Sioux's rights, the government tried to buy the hills. **Sitting Bull**, an important leader of the Lakota Sioux, refused. “I do not want to sell any land. Not even this much,” he said, holding a pinch of dust.

Sitting Bull gathered Sioux and Cheyenne warriors along the **Little Bighorn River** in present-day Montana. They were joined by **Crazy Horse**, another Sioux chief, and his

*“If we must
die, we die
defending
our rights.”*

—Sitting Bull





People In History

Chief Joseph 1840–1904



In 1877 the United States government demanded the Nez Perce give up their lands and move onto a reservation in Idaho. Chief Joseph was preparing his people for the move when he learned that several young braves had attacked a group of white settlers. Fearing revenge, Chief Joseph led his followers over 1,000

miles across Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

For more than three months he managed to evade a U.S. force ten times larger than his group. Along the way, he won the admiration of many whites for his humane treatment of prisoners, and for his concern for women, children, and the elderly.

Just 40 miles from the Canadian border the Nez Perce were surrounded. Chief Joseph's words of surrender reflect the tragedy of his people:

"The little children are freezing to death. My people . . . have no blankets, no food . . . I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

forces. The United States Army was ordered to round up the warriors and move them to reservations. The Seventh Cavalry, led by Lieutenant Colonel **George Custer**, was ordered to scout the Native American encampment.

Custer wanted the glory of leading a major victory. He divided his regiment and attacked the Native Americans on June 25, 1876. He had seriously underestimated their strength, however. With about 250 soldiers, Custer faced a Sioux and Cheyenne force of thousands. Custer and his entire command lost their lives. News of the army's defeat shocked the nation.

The Native American triumph at Little Bighorn was short-lived. The army soon crushed the uprising, sending most of the Native Americans to reservations. Sitting Bull and his followers fled north to Canada. By 1881, exhausted and starving, the Lakota and Cheyenne agreed to live on a reservation.

The Apache Wars

Trouble also broke out in the Southwest. The Chiracahua Apache had been moved from their homeland to the San Carlos reservation in

Arizona in the mid-1870s. Many Apache resented confinement to this reservation. The Apache leader, **Geronimo**, escaped from San Carlos and fled to Mexico with a small band of followers. During the 1880s he led raids against settlers and the army in Arizona.

Thousands of troops pursued Geronimo and his warriors. Several times he went back to the reservation. Geronimo said,

“Once I moved about like the wind. Now I surrender to you.”

But again he left the reservation. In 1886 Geronimo finally gave up—the last Native American to surrender formally to the United States.

A Changing Culture

Many things contributed to changing the traditional way of life of Native Americans—the movement of whites onto their lands, the slaughter of the buffalo, United States Army attacks, and the reservation policy. More change came from well-meaning reformers who wanted to abolish reservations and absorb the Native Americans into white American culture.



American reformers such as **Helen Hunt Jackson** were horrified by the massacres of Native Americans and by the cruelty of the reservation system. Describing the whites' treatment of Native Americans in her 1881 book, *A Century of Dishonor*, Jackson wrote:

“It makes little difference . . . where one opens the record of the history of the Indians; every page and every year has its dark stain.”

Congress changed government policy with the **Dawes Act** in 1887. The law aimed to eliminate what Americans regarded as the two weaknesses of Native American life: the lack of private property and the nomadic tradition.

The Dawes Act proposed to break up the reservations and to end identification with a tribal group. Each Native American would receive a plot of reservation land. The goal was to encourage native peoples to become farmers and, eventually, American citizens. Native American children would be sent to white-run boarding schools. Some of the reservation lands would be sold to support this schooling.

Over the next 50 years, the government divided up the reservations. Speculators acquired most of the valuable land. Native Americans often received dry, gravelly plots that were not suited to farming.

Wounded Knee

The Dawes Act changed forever the Native American way of life and weakened their cultural traditions. In their despair the Sioux turned in 1890 to Wovoka, a prophet. Wovoka claimed that the Sioux could regain their former greatness if they performed a ritual known as the **Ghost Dance**.

The Ghost Dance was a way for the Sioux to express their culture that was being destroyed. As the ritual spread, reservation officials became alarmed and decided to ban the dance. Believing that their chief, Sitting Bull, was the leader of the movement, police went to his camp to arrest him. During a scuffle, they shot Sitting Bull.

Several hundred Lakota Sioux fled in fear after Sitting Bull's death. They gathered at a creek called **Wounded Knee** in southwestern South Dakota. On December 29, 1890, the army went there to collect the Sioux's weapons. No one knows how the fighting started, but when a pistol shot rang out, the army responded with fire. More than 200 Sioux and 25 soldiers were killed.

Wounded Knee marked the end of armed conflict between whites and Native Americans. The Native Americans had lost their long struggle.

Reading Check **Describing** What was the purpose of the Dawes Act?

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

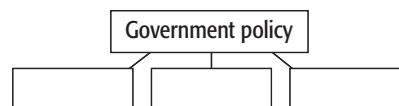
- Key Terms** Use each of these terms in a sentence that will help explain its meaning: **nomadic**, **reservation**.
- Reviewing Facts** Who were Geronimo and Chief Joseph?

Reviewing Themes

- Culture and Traditions** What two aspects of Native American life was the Dawes Act supposed to eliminate?

Critical Thinking

- Identifying Central Issues** Re-create the diagram below and identify ways the government reservation policy ignored the needs of Native Americans.



- Drawing Conclusions** Did the Dawes Act reflect an effort by the United States government to change Native American life? If so, how?

Analyzing Visuals

- Geography Skills** Study the map on page 544. When did the Battle of Wounded Knee occur? Where were the Shoshone reservations located?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Science Research to find out more about the buffalo. With the buffalo at the center, create a diagram that shows the importance of this animal in the everyday life and culture of Plains Native Americans.



SECTION 4

Farmers in Protest

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

In the late 1800s, farmers began to band together in groups and associations to fight their problems.

Key Terms

National Grange, cooperative, Populist Party, free silver

Reading Strategy

Identifying Central Issues As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and identify the problems farmers faced in the late 1800s.



Read to Learn

- why farmers faced hard times in the late 1800s.
- how farmers tried to solve their problems.

Section Theme

Groups and Institutions During the late 1800s, farmers worked together to try to improve their lives.

Preview of Events



AN American Story

In the last decades of the 1800s, farmers suffered from falling prices and rising costs. They expressed their frustration in a popular song:

*"When the banker says he's broke
And the merchant's up in smoke
They forget that it's the farmer feeds them all. . . .
The farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall;
With the interest rates so high,
It's a wonder he don't die,
For the mortgage man's the one who gets it all."*



Poster celebrating the farmer, 1876

The Farmers Organize

After the Civil War, farming expanded in the West and the South, and more land came under cultivation. The supply of crops grew faster than the demand for them, however, and prices fell steadily. In 1866 a bushel of wheat sold for \$1.45. By the mid-1880s the price had dropped to 80 cents and by the mid-1890s to 49 cents. At the same time, farmers' expenses—for transporting their goods

[CLICK HERE](#)**HISTORY**
Online**Student Web Activity**

Visit taj.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 18—Student Web Activities** for an activity on the life of a farmer in the late 1800s.

to market, for seed, and for equipment and other manufactured goods—remained high. The farmers' plight gave rise to bitter feelings.

Farmers blamed their troubles on three groups in particular. They resented the railroad companies, which charged farmers more to ship crops than they charged manufacturers to ship goods. They were angry at the Eastern manufacturers, who charged high prices for their products. They also had problems with bankers.

Farmers needed to borrow money to buy seed, equipment, and other goods. After they sold their crops, they had to pay the high interest rates set by bankers. If crops failed and farmers could not repay the loans, they were in danger of losing their farms.

Farmers with small and middle-sized holdings struggled to survive. Senator William A. Peffer of Kansas summed up the farmers' plight when he noted that the railroad companies "took possession of the land" and the bankers "took possession of the farmer."

The Grange

Farmers began to organize in an effort to solve their problems. Within a short time, they had created a mass political movement.

The first farmers' organization of this period was a network of local self-help organizations that eventually came to be called the **National Grange**. The Grange offered farmers education, fellowship, and support. For inexperienced farmers, the Grange provided a library with books on planting and livestock raising. For lonely farm families, it organized social gatherings. In an 1874 declaration of purposes, the Grange said,

“We propose meeting together, talking together, working together, buying together, selling together....”

Above all, the Grange tried to encourage economic self-sufficiency. It set up “cash-only” **cooperatives**, stores where farmers bought products from each other. The cooperatives charged lower prices than regular stores and provided an outlet for farmers' crops. The purpose of the “cash-only” policy was to remove the burden of credit buying that threatened farmers.

In the 1870s the Grange tried to cut farmers' costs by getting state legislatures to limit railroad shipping rates. Many Midwestern states did pass such laws. By 1878, however, the railroads had put so much pressure on state legislatures that these states repealed the rate regulations.

The Grange cooperatives also failed. Farmers were always short of cash and had to borrow money until their next crop was sold. The cash-only cooperative could not work if borrowing was necessary. By the late 1870s, the Grange had declined. Rural reformers then tried to help farmers through the Farmers' Alliances.

The Farmers' Alliances

The **Farmers' Alliances** were networks of organizations that sprang up in the West and the South in the 1880s. The Southern Alliance was founded in Texas when farmers rallied against the railroads and against “money power.”

Alliance leaders extended the movement to other states. By 1890 the Southern Alliance had more than three million members, and the Colored Farmers' National Alliance, a separate organization of African American farmers, had one million members. An Alliance movement developed in the Plains states as well.

Like the Grange, the Farmers' Alliances sponsored education and cooperative buying and selling. The Alliances also proposed a plan in which the federal government would store farmers' crops in warehouses and lend money to the farmers. When the stored crops were sold, the farmers would pay back the government loans. Such a plan would reduce the power that railroads, banks, and merchants had over farmers and would offer farmers some federal protection.

If the Alliances had remained united, they would have been a powerful political force. Regional differences and personality clashes kept the groups apart, however.

Reading Check **Describing** What is the purpose of a cooperative?



Analyzing Political Cartoons

Party of Patches The cartoonist shows the Populist Party as a collection of special interest groups and minor political parties. **Does the cartoon support or ridicule the Populist Party? Explain.**

A Party of the People

In the 1890 election, the Alliances became active in political campaigns. Candidates they supported won 6 governorships, 3 seats in the United States Senate, and 50 seats in the House of Representatives.

The Populist Party

Pleased with such successes, Alliance leaders worked to turn the movement into a national political party. In February 1890, Alliance members had formed the People's Party of the U.S.A., also known as the **Populist Party**. The goals of this new party were rooted in **populism**, or appeal to the common people.

The new party claimed that the government, not private companies, should own the railroads and telegraph lines. The Populists also wanted to replace the country's gold-based currency system with a flexible currency system that was based on **free silver**—the unlimited production of silver coins. They believed that putting more silver coins into the economy would give farmers more money to pay their debts.

The Populist Party supported a number of political and labor reforms. They wanted election reforms such as limiting the president and vice president to a single term, electing senators

directly, and introducing the use of secret ballots. They also called for shorter hours for workers and the creation of a national income tax.

Populist Gains and Problems

At a convention in **Omaha, Nebraska**, in July 1892, the Populist Party nominated **James B. Weaver** of Iowa to run for president. In the election Weaver received more than 1 million votes—8.5 percent of the total—and 22 electoral votes. **Grover Cleveland**, the Democratic candidate, won the election, but the Populists had done well for a third party.

The Populists made a strong showing in the state and local elections of 1894 and had high hopes for the presidential election of 1896. The party nominated a number of energetic candidates, but it lacked money and organization.

\$Economics

Free Silver

To make matters worse, antagonism between the North and the South plagued the Populist Party. In addition many white Southerners could not bring themselves to join forces with African American Populists.

Another blow against populism was struck by the Democratic Party in the South. In the 1890s Democrat-controlled Southern state legislatures placed strict limits on the rights of African Americans to vote. Many freedmen—who might have supported the Populists—were unable to vote.

The Populist crusade for free silver and against the “money power” continued, however. Banking and business interests warned that coining unlimited amounts of new currency would lead to inflation and ruin the economy.



Farmers were joined by debtors in supporting free silver, hoping that loans could be repaid more cheaply. Silver-mining companies in the West also supported the cause. If the government coined large quantities of silver, they had a place to sell their metal.

In the mid-1890s Democrats from farm and silver-producing states took up the free silver issue. This created a problem for Populists. Should they ally themselves with these Democrats? Or should they remain a separate party and risk dividing the free-silver vote?

The Election of 1896

President Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, opposed free silver. At their 1896 convention, however, the Democrats chose a candidate for president who supported free silver and other Populist goals. He was 36-year-old **William Jennings Bryan**, known as the Great Commoner because of his appeal to average Americans. Bryan passionately believed in the farmers' causes.


The Populists decided to endorse Bryan as their candidate for president and to nominate their own candidate, Tom Watson of Georgia, for vice president. The Republicans nominated **William McKinley** of Ohio for president. A former representative and governor of Ohio, McKinley was a shrewd politician who opposed free silver.

A fiery speaker, Bryan proved to be an outstanding campaigner. He crossed the nation giving one dynamic speech after another, attacking bankers and other money interests.

Bryan's strenuous campaigning was in vain. By the time of the election, an economic depression that had slowed business in the early 1890s was nearly over. Voters believed that good times were returning, and they put their trust in the Republican candidate McKinley, who represented stability. Even the economic situation of the farmers was improving. The Populists' message no longer seemed urgent. McKinley won 271 electoral votes to Bryan's 176. McKinley received 7.1 million popular votes to 6.5 million for Bryan. The Populist ticket received only 222,600 popular votes and won no electoral votes.

The Populist Legacy

In one sense, however, the Populists were victorious. Reformers adopted many Populist ideas and succeeded in getting many new laws passed. In the 1900s, the United States abandoned the gold standard, adopted an eight-hour workday, and introduced an income tax. Election reforms brought in the secret ballot and direct election of senators. These were Populist goals.

 **Reading Check** **Examining** Which of the Populists' political reforms are a part of our political system today?

SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

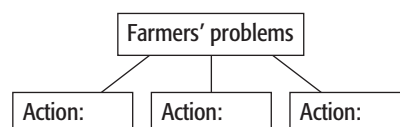
- Key Terms** Write a one-page newsletter for the Populist Party that uses these terms: **National Grange**, **cooperative**, **Populist Party**, **free silver**.
- Reviewing Facts** Who were the presidential candidates in the election of 1896?

Reviewing Themes

- Groups and Institutions** Why were granges and alliances formed?

Critical Thinking

- Making Inferences** Why do you think the Populists considered themselves to be a party of the people?
- Analyzing Information** Re-create the diagram below and explain what actions farmers took to address their problems.



Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Political Cartoons** Look at the cartoon on page 550. Why are the names of many groups shown on the balloon?

Interdisciplinary Activity

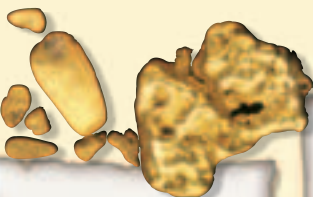
Citizenship Write a campaign slogan for a Populist candidate who is running for office, and make a bumper sticker displaying your slogan.

CHAPTER 18

ASSESSMENT and ACTIVITIES

Chapter Summary

The Western Frontier



Mining

- Gold is discovered on Pikes Peak
- Comstock Lode discovered
- Mining companies form
- Boomtowns appear
- Many boomtowns turn into ghost towns

Railroads

- Railroads expand to meet needs of Western mines
- Railroads receive government grants
- Transcontinental rail line completed
- More settlers move west
- Raw materials shipped east; manufactured goods shipped west

Western Frontier

Ranchers and Farmers

- Long drives move cattle to railroad towns
- Cow towns become important stations
- Homestead Act increases settlement of Great Plains
- Oklahoma opened to homesteaders

Native Americans

- Plains Native Americans depend on the buffalo
- Whites massacre the buffalo
- Government moves Native Americans to reservations
- Native American resistance leads to war
- Conflict with Native Americans ends with massacre at Wounded Knee



Reviewing Key Terms

On a sheet of paper, create a crossword puzzle using the following terms. Use the terms' definitions as your crossword clues.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. lode | 4. cooperative |
| 2. ore | 5. nomadic |
| 3. vigilante | 6. reservation |

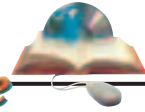
Reviewing Key Facts

- In what ways did the transcontinental railroad help to boost the American economy?
- Where did the Chisholm Trail begin?
- What attracted farmers to the Great Plains?
- Who were the Exodusters?
- What problem did dry farming address?
- What actions by whites destroyed the buffalo population?
- In what present-day state was the Indian Territory located?
- Who was Geronimo?
- How did the Grange help farmers?
- What political reforms did the Populists support?

Critical Thinking

- Geography and History** How did the rush to find gold and silver spark the creation of new communities in the West?
- Analyzing Themes: Economic Factors** Why was the Cattle Kingdom dependent on the railroads?
- Analyzing Themes: Groups and Institutions** Describe the problems that led farmers to organize granges and alliances.
- Analyzing Themes: Culture and Traditions** Re-create the diagram below and describe what actions by the United States government and white settlers brought an end to the traditional Native American way of life.





Self-Check Quiz

Visit taj.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 18—Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the chapter test.



Geography and History Activity

Study the map on page 544 and answer these questions.

21. **Location** In what state did the Battle of Little Bighorn take place?
22. **Movement** In which direction from Wyoming did the Nez Perce people travel?
23. **Region** In what area did the Hopi people live?

Practicing Skills

Reading a Special-Purpose Map

Study the special-purpose map below; then answer the questions that follow.

24. What geographic region is shown?
25. In what part of Texas were most of the large cattle ranches located?
26. Where did the Western Trail end?



Citizenship Cooperative Activity

27. **Constitutional Interpretations** With a partner, find information about the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1975, and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Prepare an informational brochure that describes these acts.

Economics Activity

28. **History and Economics** Today many Native Americans still live on reservations. Some reservations have developed their own businesses and industries to help make them more self-sufficient. With a partner, research to find information about a reservation in the United States today. Write a report describing one of the major businesses on that reservation.



Alternative Assessment

29. **Portfolio Writing Activity** Reread and take notes on the section of the chapter that discusses the chores of a farm woman. Use your notes to create an hour-by-hour schedule to show one day's typical activities for a farm wife living on the Great Plains.

Standardized Test Practice

Directions: Choose the best answer to the following question.

People in the late 1800s took advantage of the open grasslands of the West to develop which of these industries?

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| A Banking | C Ranching |
| B Manufacturing | D Mining |

Test-Taking Tip

The important words in this question are *open grasslands*. Banking and manufacturing do not need open grasslands, so you can easily eliminate answers **A** and **B**.