American West Question Types

In your exam you will be asked **three questions** about the American West

Consequence

Explain **one** consequence of…

Example

Explain one consequence of the transcontinental railroad for the development of the American West.

Narrative Account

Write a narrative account analysing…

Example

Write a narrative account analysing the development of the cattle industry between c.1860 – c.1880. You may use the following in your answer:

- Abilene
- John Iliff

Importance

Explain the importance of *X* for…

Example

Explain the importance of the buffalo to the life of the indigenous peoples.

The Lifestyle & Beliefs of the Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous peoples had lived on the American continent for hundreds of years before Europeans settled on the land from the 1500s. The Indigenous peoples lived in their vast **tribes** across the whole continent. By the 1600s however, Europeans began to settle on the east coast of America, brought there by the promise of new land and resources for trading. By the early 1800s, towns and cities had grown along the east coast and these 'Americans' had formed their own government. From this time, some Americans began exploring westwards into indigenous lands. Between the 1830s and 1890s, thousands of Americans headed west. However, this **westward migration** eventually led to the rapid decline in the traditional ways of life of the indigenous peoples. It's important therefore to understand what the lifestyle and beliefs of the indigenous peoples were and why this was so important to the survival of the indigenous peoples, especially those living on the **Great Plains** of America.

The Environment of the Great Plains

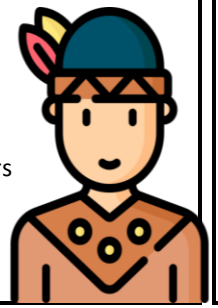
- Parts of the Great Plains included woodlands, rivers and streams as well as tall **grasslands**. In other parts the land would be **dry** like a **desert** with very **little water.**
- The climate was very extreme. There were **strong winds** all year round. Winters would bring freezing cold blizzards, but summers were extremely hot, drying up the land and rivers. **Storms** brought flooding and as well as fires from the lightening.
- Wildlife in the Great Plains was well adapted to living in these extreme conditions. Animals included deer, rabbits, coyote, eagles, hawks and great herds of **buffalo** which were sacred to the indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Home & Family Life

- Indigenous peoples used a tent like structure called a **tepee** as their family home. It was made from 15-20 **buffalo skins** sewn together and supported by a wooden frame. It was the responsibility of the **women** to make the tepee.
- The indigenous peoples moved to follow the migration of the **buffalo** – they were **nomadic**. As a result, the tepee was designed to be easily taken down and packed for transport.
- At the top of the tipi were wooden flaps that could be moved to allow the smoke from the fire inside to escape.
- Tepees were often **decorated** by the men with shapes and scenes recording their bravery in the hunt and battle.
- Inside, the fire would always burn, and the floor was covered in furs in the colder months to keep the family warm.
- Within the family there were different roles. Men were responsible for hunting, looking after horses and protecting the band. They were judges by their skills as hunters and warriors. Women were responsible for the tepee, preparing food, making clothing and fetching water.

Tribal Organisation & Roles

- Different indigenous communities were known as **tribes**. To survive on the plains, tribes had to co-operate and be well organised. They would sometimes meet up and hunt together to share their skills.
- The leader of each tribe was called a **chief**. There could be more than one chief in a tribe such as a war chief or a spiritual chief. Chiefs were not elected and didn't just inherit their status from their family. They became a chief because of their wisdom, spiritual powers or their skills as hunters and warriors.
- Each tribe was split into **bands** who would travel together. Each band had between 10 – 50 different **families** which meant some were much bigger than others. The bands of a tribe would meet up every summer at a **tribal camp**.
- **Elders** were experienced men in the tribe who helped chiefs make important decisions.
- Important decisions were made in the **council**. The men of the band would discuss their issues and listen to the opinion of the chiefs, elders and warriors. It was normal for the men in the council to keep discussing until everyone agreed on an issue. While talking, they would smoke a **ceremonial pipe**. They believed the smoke from this pipe would communicate with the spirit world who would then help them make the right decision.
- Plains Indians also had **Warrior Brotherhoods** where **young men** joined to prove their bravery and skills as hunters and fighters. These young men were trained and taught the traditional beliefs of the Plains Indians.



Beliefs about Land & Nature

- Many tribes on the Great Plains like the **Sioux Indians** believed in a **Great Spirit** which had created all life. They believed that all living things had spirits such as animals, birds and plants as well as human beings.
- They believed that humans could contact spirits through **Vision Quests** guided by spirit animals. For example, before the Battle Of Little Bighorn, Chief Sitting Bull had a vision of US army soldiers falling and plains Indians coming back to life.
- Another way of contacting the spirit world was through **dances** such as the **Buffalo Dance** or the **Sun Dance**. These dances were highly respected by everyone in a tribe.
- Indigenous peoples believed that land was **sacred** and should not be harmed by being dug up, farmed or ploughed as this was destroying the land. Some lands were also sacred, especially high places which were seen as closer to the spirit world.
- For example, the Sioux believed that the **Black Hills** were sacred as this is where they took their dead for burial.
- Indigenous peoples did not believe in **owning** land for their own property. They believed that land was not there to be bought or sold as it should be respected.
- Their nomadic lifestyle echoed their belief that land should never be over-used at any one time and so had time to recover.

Attitudes to Warfare & Conflict

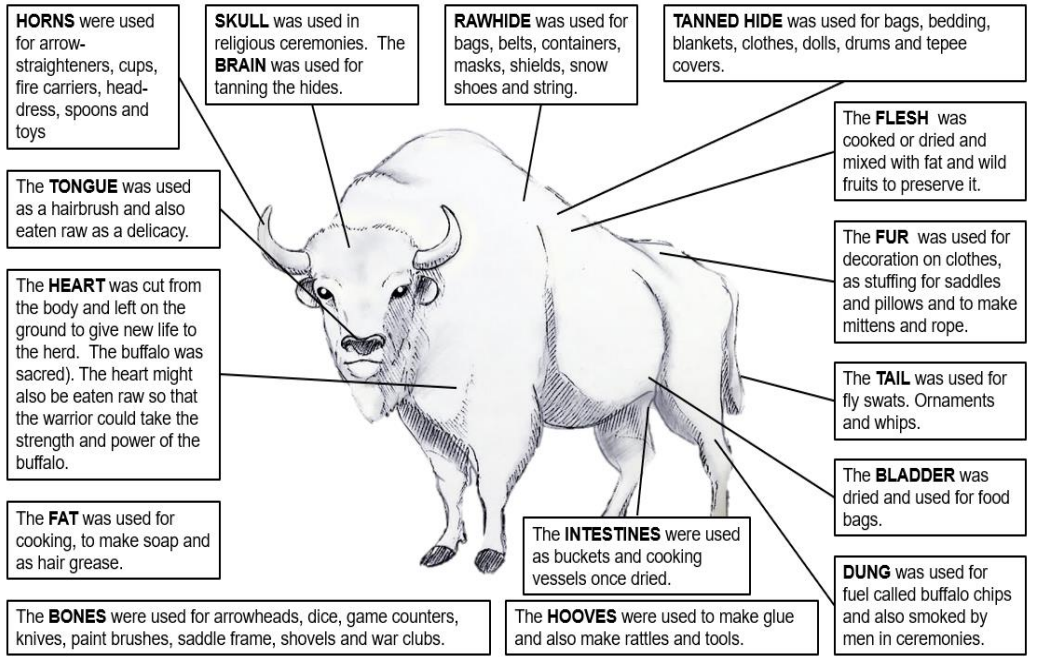
- Indigenous peoples rarely fought long campaigns with huge numbers of warriors. Instead, any war tended to be a **raid** by a small number of warriors. Raids were only ever carried out in the summer as the winters were too harsh to fight.
- It was only when Indigenous peoples began to fight the American settlers that any fighting took place in the winter. Tribes might raid for food, horses and even women to marry. Young men were seen as too valuable & so tribes did not want to risk them.
- Warriors often took **scalps** as evidence of their success in battle. The scalps were then dried and hung as trophies or used to decorate a warrior's war dress. Scalps were taken as the indigenous peoples believed that if a warrior lost his scalp, he could not enter the afterlife.
- A **counting coup** was a special type of raid where a warrior would attempt to hit (rather than kill) the enemy. This was seen as just as successful as a kill.

The Importance of the Buffalo & Horse to Indigenous Peoples

Hunting the Buffalo

- Buffalo were **sacred** to the indigenous peoples and key to their **survival.** Their whole existence depended on the buffalo which is why they led a nomadic lifestyle which followed the **natural migration** of the buffalo across the Great Plains.
- In the winter months, indigenous tribes might stay in more protected wooden **lodges** but apart from this they were on the move all the time.
- Before setting out to hunt, the indigenous people would hold a ceremonial **Buffalo Dance** which lasted several days. They used the dance to call upon the **spirit world** to wish them luck in their hunting and to call the buffalo closer to them.
- Key to the hunt, was that they only killed the buffalo they needed to survive and out of respect, used the whole animal. This was seen as part of the respect they would show for animal. **Two or three** successful buffalo hunts a year were all that was needed to feed, clothe and shelter each band.

- On horseback, the warriors would be able to hunt effectively with **bows and arrows** and **spears**.
- Each warrior would mark his arrow so that he could identify the buffalo he had killed.
- Warriors gained honour and pride from their hunting and archery skills.
- To get close enough to kill a buffalo, the hunter had to put himself and his horse in great danger.
- **Bands** would often combine if a herd of buffalo was big enough.
- After the hunt, the buffalo was **butchered** by the women and children. Some parts such as the **heart** were given as an **offering** back to the spirit world as a thank you and a show of respect for the animal.
- Other body parts such as the liver and kidneys were eaten raw as **delicacies**. Other parts were cooked, and the rest was cut into strips to be smoked or dried in the sun. This dried meat called **jerky** would keep for use in the winter months.
- The hides were worked by the women and used to make tepee covers and clothes. Every other part of the buffalo would be used to make something. This was also a way of showing respect to the animal by not wasting any part of its body.

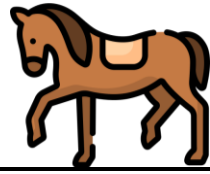


The Importance of Buffalo

- The buffalo provided all the food the indigenous people needed in such a baron and dry landscape where little other food was available.
- The buffalo provided everything the indigenous peoples needed to continue their nomadic lifestyle across the Great Plains.
- The buffalo provided the tools needed to help with everyday tasks as well as hunting more buffalo.
- The buffalo provided the equipment needed to carry food and water. For example, the stomach lining of the buffalo was dried and then used to store water.
- Parts from the buffalo such as the skull provided important ritual and spiritual symbols for the indigenous peoples so they could show their respect to the Great Spirit.

The Importance of the Horse

- Spanish invaders brought horses over during the 1500s. Some of these horses were then captured by the indigenous tribes. From then on, tribes bred and traded horses with each other.
- Horses allowed each tribes to move around the Great Plains and to hunt buffalo far more easily. They had the speed and ability to ride long, harsh distances which allowed the indigenous people to seek out buffalo herds quickly.
- Having horses for transport allowed the indigenous people to become **nomadic hunter-gatherers** who would travel to follow the migration of the herds of buffalo they relied on and go hunting for other foods and resources.
- As well as hunting, horse was used to **transport** larger items they needed such as tepees.
- Horses also changed the way the indigenous peoples fought. Warriors could raid over a much longer distance and achieve a quick retreat. It also gave a new reason for the tribes to fight each other – to steal horses.
- It also changed the way that individual warriors fought as horsemanship skills became an important part of how powerful or brave a tribe was. The more horses a tribe had, the more **status** it gave them.
- The indigenous tribes rated their wealth by how many horses they owned. For example, the Comanche tribe had 8,000 horses to only 3,000 people.



Factors that Encouraged Migration into the American West

There were many factors that influenced people living in the towns and cities on the east coast of America to move and settle in the American West. Some of these factors were **push** factors. These were negative events happening in people's lives which they felt pushed them away from the place they currently lived. However, other factors were **pull** factors. These were the things in the west of America that people were attracted to - that 'pulled' them over. Nevertheless, such a journey into the American West was for most people **dangerous**, **long** and like going into the **unknown**. Let's have a look at why these early settlers migrated westwards.

THE BELIEF IN THE MANIFEST DESTINY

- ❑ The Manifest Destiny was the belief that many Americans in the East held that it was their **God given right** to occupy and settle in the rest of the continent. They had a belief that the white Christian Americans had a right to populate all areas of America and that it was God's Will for the white Christian Americans to educate and '**civilise**' the Indigenous peoples.
- ❑ Most Americans at this time believed they were **superior** to the indigenous peoples who they saw as 'savages' who Christians needed to tame. **Christian missionaries** travelled into the American West to spread the religion of Christianity to the Plains Indians.

A POOR ECONOMY IN THE EAST

- ❑ There had been an economic depression in the towns and cities of the east.
- ❑ Banks had collapsed & businesses struggled. People had lost their **jobs** & **savings**.
- ❑ Unemployment was as high as **25%**. Wages had been cut by **40%**.
- ❑ People looked for a better life elsewhere and they were led to believe they could get this by migrating to the American West.

FERTILE FARMLAND IN OREGON

- ❑ Americans had heard from the mountain men and early settlers that the farmland on the West Coast of California and Oregon was highly fertile – perfect for growing fruits and farming.
- ❑ Oregon was already owned by America and Britain and so provided a safe area to settle. There were also vast areas of rich farmland near the Rocky Mountains.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OREGON TRAIL

- ❑ The **mountain men** discovered a pass (a way through) the Rocky Mountains which allowed them to guide travellers through. This was opened to become the **Oregon Trail**.
- ❑ The Oregon Trail was first publicised by explorer **Jedidiah Smith** in 1825. Other explorers dug out the trail and placed markers for others to follow. Mountain men were very important as their stories of the Oregon Trail encouraged others to seek their own adventures.
- ❑ The first time the trail was used with a wagon was in **1836.**
- ❑ In 1841, only 60 people successfully used the trail using a horse and wagon. By 1846, 5,000 people had travelled the trail.

US GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

- ❑ In 1841, the US government used **$30,000** to fund an expedition to **map** the new Oregon Trail.
- ❑ The **report about the trail and the publication of the map** made the trial sound like an exciting and achievable adventure for those who wanted to travel along it. The Government spent more money advertising the Oregon Trail to encourage even more people from the east to travel west.

THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN CALIFORNIA 1849

- ❑ 100,000 people left the east to reach **California** as gold had been discovered.
- ❑ California's **population** reached 300,000 by 1855 and its economy grew quickly with the many so- called **prospectors** wanting to find gold and get rich.
- ❑ This was the beginning of the Gold Rush to California!

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- ❑ The US Government created new laws which made access to the American West easier and less risky. For example, the **Indian Removal Act** (1830), and the creation of the **Permanent Indian Frontier** (1834) moved indigenous tribes further away from land that new settlers wanted to travel through.
- ❑ The **Indian Appropriations Act** (1851) began to remove of Plains Indians into **reservations**.

OVERPOPULATION IN THE EAST

Since the first Europeans came over to the east coast in the mid 1600s, more had followed. Families grew and towns had become more crowded. Some wanted to move further west to gain more land.

TO GAIN FREEDOM AND ADVENTURE

Some individuals, mainly men, set out in the 1830s to become **pioneers** of the American West. They were encouraged by the stories of the Mountain Men and of the US Governments publication of maps of the trails. They were motivated by the freedom of the journey and the fame it could give them.

TO ESCAPE RELIGIOUS DESCRIMINATION

A minority Christian group called the **MORMONS**, were being discriminated against and persecuted in the east. Many were pushed out of jobs and felt like they did not fit in. A move towards the American West would help them escape and provide new opportunities in settlements of their own.

The Experiences of the Donner Party and the Mormon Migration in 1846-7

The Oregon Trail was **3,200km long** and took **several months** to complete. This meant that migrants had to plan their trip carefully. They needed to reach a certain point before the winter, otherwise they risked getting trapped in the snow and freezing temperatures of the Rocky Mountains. They were advised not to start their journey until April when the **grass** had grown enough to feed their animals along the journey. They had to take **enough food** with them for the whole journey as well as any essentials for setting up a home once they reached their destination. The **oxen** they used to transport their goods were strong but very slow– travelling at only 3km an hour. The long rows of horse, carts, wagons and oxen were called **wagon trains**. It was safer to travel as a large group but often slower. Groups included **whole families** with a mixture of women, men, children and the elderly. It was important to make sure that those who attempted the journey west had a wide **range of skills** such as farming, building and hunting ready for their new life.

The migrants faced many dangers along the way. Any **medical emergency** could result in severe problems. Getting stranded would mean running out of supplies and **starving**. There were the dangers of **snake** or **insect bites** which could result infection. At least 20,000 migrants died because of this during this time. **Cholera** was a fatal disease and spread by people sharing contaminated water, including water which had been used to clear toilets. Migrants had the constant **fear** of being attacked by the indigenous peoples who they reported watching them. However, in reality, attacks were rare.

The Donner Party Failure 1846

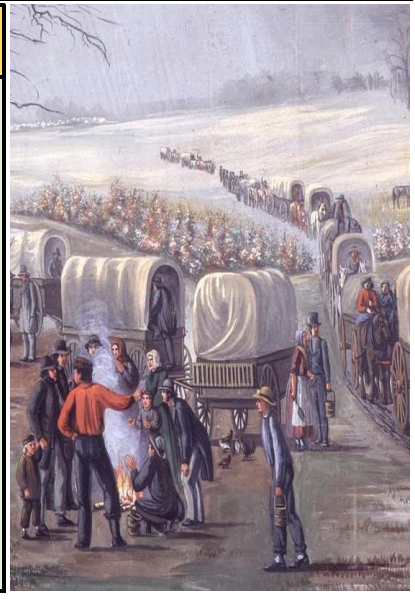
- The Donner Party set out for California in **May 1846**. They were well equipped and led by **Donner Brothers**, Jacob and George. The large group of 300 migrants and 60 wagons travelled as a **Wagon Train**. However, compared with other parties, they had more elderly, women & children.
- In July, at the Rocky Mountains they decided to split into **two groups**. 80 migrants including the Donner Brothers tried a **new short cut** which they believed would reduce the journey by 550km. This new route was untested and only briefly mentioned in an old mountain man route book.
- The route was far more difficult than they thought. They lost wagons, many oxen and cattle and more importantly they lost time – a **whole month.** They didn't return to their original route until October.
- They then began their last climb over the **Sierra Nevada** mountains.
- However, snow began to fall, the party became **stranded** and found it difficult to find **food**. There were also many arguments in the group about what they should do. Already **weak** with their previous struggles they were not well equipped for the snow or a winter on the mountains.
- By December, people and livestock began to die as food ran low.
- It was decided that **17** men, women and children should set off to cross the mountain to get help. Some died on the way and some of the others resorted to **cannibalism** to survive. Eventually, just 7 made it to a small settlement in California.
- When news of the Donner Party spread, **rescue parties** from California travelled to help. However, even they struggled to reach anyone. Out of the original number of 300 migrants, only **46 survived** to reach California.
- News of their suffering spread and was a key factor in far fewer people travelling to California the year after. However, this trend changed when **gold** was discovered in California in 1849.

Mormon Migration Success 1846-7

- The Mormons were a religious group living in the east. They faced **discrimination** wherever they lived and were often driven away.
- The Mormons were hard working and successful. Their scripture taught them that they were God's chosen people. They also held a belief that a man was able to have more than one wife – an idea called **polygamy**. This was shocking to many Christian families who saw this as a sin.
- These factors made other Christian American jealous and angry towards them.
- In 1845, the influential Mormon leader, **Joseph Smith** was murdered by a mob. They were then ordered to leave the state of Illinois.
- Their new leader, **Brigham Young** decided that the Mormons would be safer moving to the American West to an isolated place east of the Rocky Mountains called the **Great Salt Lake Valley**. Here they could be left in peace, and the land would provide for them.
- By the end of 1847, around 2,000 Mormons had reached the Salt Lake Valley and began to settle there.
- Such was Young's success it is believed that over **70,000** Mormons followed his trail to the Salt Lake Valley between 1847 - 1869.

Why were the Mormon's Successful?

- Brigham Young planned every part of the migration from the preparation beforehand to how they would become self sufficient when they reached there. The journey was **well supplied** with food and equipment. They even had a **boat built** ready for any river crossings.
- They used the start of the route set out by the **Donner Party** and **cleared land** to help other Mormon families as they made their journey west. **Rest camps** were set up with people left behind to help **repair wagons**. Thousands of **wooden cabins** were built where the weather became cold to help them survive the winter months.
- Young got the help of experienced trail guides rather than leading himself. He divided people into more manageable **groups** with the right variety of **skills to survive** in each group. Young insisted on very strict **discipline** and his decisions were well **respected** by everyone. The migrants had so much confidence in young that they believed he was a **prophet** sent by God.
- Young taught the migrants how to form their wagons in a **CIRCLE** at night which helped keep in any heat for the humans as well as the animals which they took with them. The Mormons had a range of **SKILLS** to lead a community when they got there such as **blacksmiths, carpenters** and **millers**.



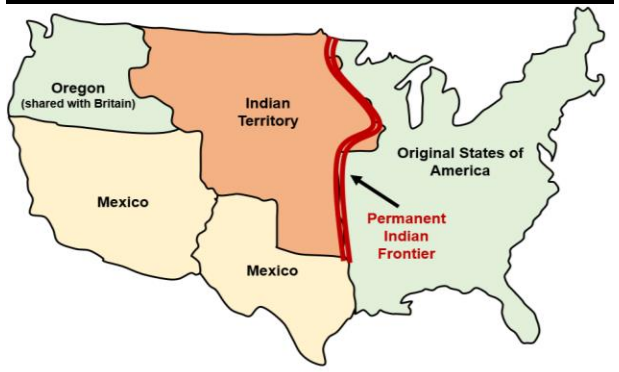
Reasons for Tension with the Indigenous Peoples - US Government Policies

When the first European settlers arrived on the east coast of America, they soon encountered the indigenous peoples. Over the years, the relationship between the new settler and indigenous peoples varied - at times helpful and friendly but also times of **hostility** and **violence**. By the **1830s**, many more Americans in the east wanted to explore lands to the west. This naturally meant that they would encounter the indigenous peoples more often. In American eyes, the indigenous peoples were a **barrier** who got in the way of their migration west. As a result, the America government became involved, and laws were passed which forced the indigenous peoples away from their sacred lands to make way for American settlement. Ultimately, these laws aimed to place indigenous peoples into small areas of land controlled by the government called **reservations**. In each case, the American government made promises to the indigenous tribes that no more land would be taken. However, these government **promises** were almost always broken with indigenous peoples being forced onto smaller areas of land with no respect or understanding for their traditions, cultures or lifestyle.

Indian Removal Act 1830

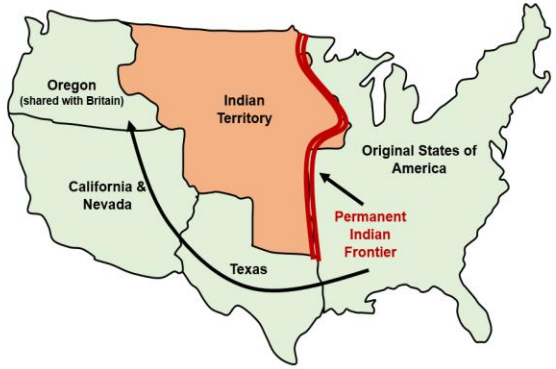
- Under the terms of the Indian Removal Act, **President Jackson** pressured **46,000** indigenous peoples living in the east of America to move **west of the Mississippi River** into land which was then officially named **Indian territory**.
- Jackson **promised** the indigenous peoples that they would never have to leave the Indian Territory.
- This caused huge upset for the indigenous tribes who had to move hundreds of miles from sacred lands.
- With little support from the government, thousands died on their journey along a route which became known as **the Trail of Tears**.

Permanent Indian Frontier 1834



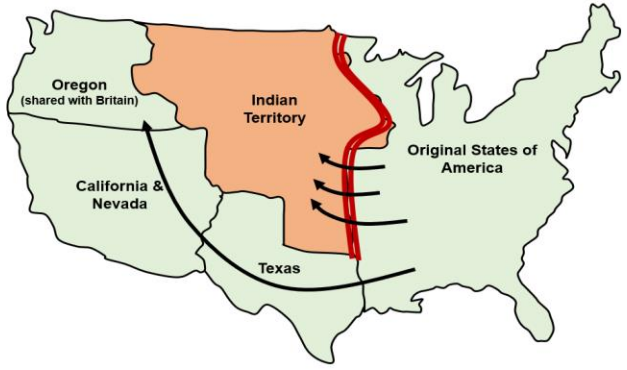
- As a result of the Indian Removal Act, the American government wanted to create a visible and physical border between Indian Territory and the American states. This borderline between the two sides was known as the **Permanent Indian Frontier**.
- To enforce this, American Army **troops** built a series of **military tracks and forts** along the **frontier line.** Here, US Army troops would be stationed to patrol the frontier.
- The Permanent Indian Frontier legally **banned** any Americans from accessing land inside the Indian Territory.
- However, the indigenous tribes were not used to the idea of a border. Furthermore, tribes close to the frontier line were watched by the US Army which increased tensions.

US-Mexican War 1848



- The land in the south was originally owned by Mexico. However, America defeated Mexico in war and gained its land which became known as the state of Texas. It was located south of the Indian Territory.
- Consequently, Americans could now travel through Texas to get to the west and reach the states of Oregon and California.
- Using Texas would be **less expensive** than travelling by sea. **New trails** were set up through Texas and **more US troops** were sent there to guard against potential indigenous threats.
- However, some Americans began **crossing the Indian frontier as a short cut** to get to Texas. This further increased tensions with settlers coming into contact with tribes.

Indian Appropriations Act 1851



- By the 1850s, the American government wanted to encourage more settlement in the west without the risk of settlers being attacked by indigenous peoples (attacks were rare).
- The Indian Appropriation Act provided money to pay for the indigenous peoples in the Indian Territory to be placed into **reservations**. Further **promises** were made (and broken) to provide protection, food and supplies.
- Reservations were large areas of land that were to be used by the indigenous peoples but would be managed by the US government.
- Hunting lands were also included in the reservation lands to allow the Plains Indians to continue to hunt for buffalo and other animals. However, it meant that their traditional **nomadic life** would be restricted significantly.
- By restricting indigenous peoples so much, it was hoped by the American government that they would want to give up their traditions and want to live just like white American people.

Migration & Settlement: The Development & Problems of Early Settlement

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Once the settlers had reached California and Oregon, many wanted to set up farms and settle on their own land. The land in California and Oregon was excellent for farming with rich and fertile soil. Settlers even grew enough wheat to export to Europe and make money. Being on the coastline, machinery could be shipped in to help the farmers who settled there. However, the American government then encouraged settlers to take up land in two other territories on the Great Plains - **Kansas** and **Nebraska**. These new areas had not even been studied to see how suitable they would be for growing crops, building and farming. Unfortunately, many settlers claimed **homestead** land here before even seeing it. Upon their arrival, the **homesteaders** soon experienced problems living and farming on the Great Plains.

Living Problems

Water Shortage

- Throughout the Great Plains, water was scarce.
- It was difficult for people and **animals** to keep clean or have suitable **drinking** water.

Lack of Fuel

- There was little **wood** to burn as fuel or cooking.
- Any fuel had to be transported with the settlers when they first migrated.
- Therefore, homesteaders used dried buffalo dung which were called **cow chips** or **buffalo chips** to fuel and heat their homes.

Building Materials

- Some homesteaders successfully settled in river valleys where trees would grow. They could use timber for building homes. Wealthier homesteaders imported timber from the east, but this was too expensive for most.
- The only real building material for families was from the earth. Blocks of earth called **sods** were cut out by hand or with a special plough. These **sod houses** were roofed with boards covered in grass and more sod.
- The outside of the home would then be plastered with a **clay** like mud and left to dry. Well built sod houses were cheap to build and warm in the winter.
- However, it was difficult to stop rain leaking in and they constantly needed repair.

Extreme Weather

- The weather was **extremely hot** in the summer and **bitterly cold** in the winter.
- With low rainfall this made life on the Great Plains difficult and uncomfortable. The indigenous peoples understood this and so moved with the seasons, however these new **homesteaders** stayed in their one home in the same spot.
- They hated the **fierce winds** that howled around their homes and had the potential to destroy crops and other resources they needed. When it did rain, storms could be powerful, and **fires** were caused by lightning storms.

Dirt and Disease

- The sod houses were very difficult to keep clean and contained no end of **bugs**, **fleas**, **mice**, **snakes** and other irritating insects.
- These conditions, especially with the shortage of water often caused **diseases** to quickly spread.
- Illness was very common, especially amongst children.

Farming Problems

Water Shortage

- For farming, the shortage of water was a major problem. It led to the failure of **crops**. This in turn could lead to **starvation**.
- In some places, homesteaders could **irrigate land** to bring water to their sod houses. However, on the Great Plains there were few rivers or lakes.
- **Wells** were a possible solution for some but digging a well was back breaking and expensive. Even then, there was no guarantee of finding water.

Growing Crops

- Homesteaders believed they could grow the same crops they had in the east like maize or wheat. However, these crops were unsuited to **dry soil** and often failed.
- It was impossible to buy or import foods into the American west and so many homesteaders struggled in their first years.

Extreme Weather

Drought in the summer and cold in winter damaged or destroyed crops. In **Kansas**, no rain fell between January 1859 and November 1860.

Difficult Ploughing

- The Great Plains had never been farmed before and the land was **tough**, **dry** and full of **long roots** from the grasses that grew there.
- Homesteaders attempted to plough the land but the ploughs they brought with them were **too weak** and needed **repairing**.
- Farmers had to slowly dig by hand or hire an expensive plough team with oxen.

Protecting Crops

- There was no timber for **fencing** and so nothing to protect crops from the weather or herds of buffalo which natural migrated across the land.
- No fences also made it hard for homesteaders to mark their land and so sometimes this would lead to **arguments** over land boundaries.

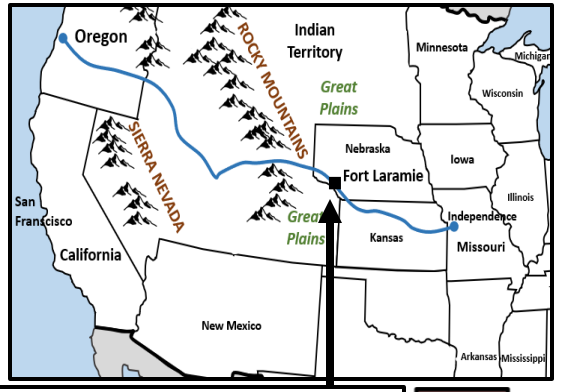
Natural Hazards

- **Prairie fires** easily started in the summer. If they were too big to tackle, crops and homesteads could be destroyed. Fire could be started by indigenous people encouraging new grass roots, lightning strikes or accidents from campfires.
- Plagues of **Rocky Mountain grasshoppers** swept across the Plains. In 1856 they caused great damage in Nebraska. They could kill off crops and infest the wool on the sheep that were farmed.

Conflict & Tension – The Fort Laramie Treaty 1851

The Tension between the Indigenous Peoples and the American Settlers

During the 1840s, more settlers were using trails like the Oregon Trail to settle in the American West. They began to move across land which had been designated as protected **Indian Territory** – many motivated by the discovery of gold in California in 1849. The settlers became **fearful** of the indigenous peoples. They had heard frightening stories of tribes raiding each other's camps for food, horses and weapons. The settlers believed they might be **scalped** by the indigenous peoples or have children taken away. However, attacks on the settlers were rare. The settlers had a strong **racist views** about indigenous peoples and believed they had a God given right to the land that they were travelling across. From an indigenous point of view, the migrants disrupted the movement of the buffalo by frightening them to **stampede** or hunted too many buffalo for meat. The oxen brought by the settlers ate the grass the buffalo relied on which meant buffalo herds were disturbed. The settlers put pressure on the US government to protect them. The American government responded by arranging to negotiate with tribal leaders at **Fort Laramie** in 1851.

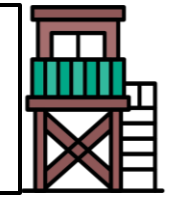


The Government Aims of the Fort Laramie Treaty

- ❑ The US government organised a meeting with indigenous tribal leaders from the Great Plains. Their aim was for the tribes to agree to end any 'frightening' conflicts and raids between each other - as this was scaring the white settlers.
- ❑ To encourage further migration, they also wanted the indigenous peoples to promise settlers safe access across the Great Plains.
- ❑ The government also pushed for the indigenous peoples to agree to live in reservations controlled by the US government.

Where was Fort Laramie?

Fort Laramie was in the central **Great Plains** along the **Oregon Trail**. As a **fort**, the **American Army** were already stationed there to **protect white settlers.** It was in the middle of **Sioux tribal** land.



TENSIONS: The Problems Agreeing the Fort Laramie Treaty

Tribal Leaders	**MAIN PROBLEM:** The US wanted each tribe to name just **one chief** to represent the whole tribe at Fort Laramie. The indigenous tribes did not work like this as they had different chiefs for different roles. **CONSEQUENCE:** The Chiefs selected had **little experience** or knowledge of what they were doing. They did not know what the best agreement would be for their own tribes or others as the experience was so new.
Meeting all tribes	**MAIN PROBLEM:** Some tribes **did not attend** the treaty, and many were not really interested in what was happening. In fact, some were mainly there for the **free food** and **gifts** on offer. **CONSEQUENCE:** Some tribes were **not aware** of what was agreed to as their own Chief was not present. Chiefs did not take the treaty seriously.
Land & Using Maps	**MAIN PROBLEM:** The US Government wanted exact boundaries on a **map**. However, the indigenous peoples did not believe land should 'belong' to anyone and so did not believe in borders or boundaries. **CONSEQUENCE:** The indigenous peoples simply could not understand borderlines being put on a map. This meant they were likely to go beyond a borderline and break the terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty.
Language Issues	**MAIN PROBLEM:** The Treaty was written in **English** and there were not enough people to properly **translate** to make sure the tribes understood its meaning or importance. **CONSEQUENCE:** It was impossible for the indigenous peoples to know what they had just signed. They were heavily manipulated by the US government.

The Government Agreed

- ❑ To protect indigenous peoples from attacks by white settlers trying to settle on former Indian Territory land.
- ❑ To give tribes a yearly payment of **$50,000** but ONLY IF the tribe kept to the terms of the treaty. This included paying the tribes in food and resources.

The Tribes Agreed

- ❑ To end traditional fighting and raiding between their tribes.
- ❑ To allow migrants safe travel through their lands.
- ❑ To allow railroad companies to enter their territories safely to survey the land.
- ❑ To allow the government to build roads and army forts through their land.
- ❑ Allow more army forts to be built.
- ❑ Pay a financial compensation if any tribe broke any terms of the Fort Laramie treaty.

The Consequences of Fort Laramie Treaty 1851

RESERVATIONS – For the **first time** the US government looked at restricting the land of the indigenous peoples. This eventually led to the use of reservations after the **Indian Appropriations Act** in the same year.

MOVEMENT FOR AMERICANS: Settlers could now freely travel across Indian territory. Therefore, it broke the border set out in the **1834 Permanent Indian Frontier**. This led to greater settlement of the Plains.

RAILROADS: Railroad surveyors were allowed on to the Great Plains for the first time. This then resulted in the first railroads being build across the American West in the 1860s.

ARMY FORTS: The US army were allowed into the Great Plains and allowed to build forts. This led to further settlement on the Great Plains with migrants guarded by the US army. They rarely protected the tribes from settlers as promised in the treaty.

LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE: By giving the indigenous tribes **food and resources** as part of their yearly payment, the they became to rely on the US Government for these resources, especially if they struggled to hunt buffalo. Therefore, the indigenous peoples began to lose their independence and way of life.

FORMAL RELATIONSHIP: It was the first treaty signed between the two sides. This led the American government to believe they could take advantage of the indigenous peoples in future treaties.

Conflict & Tension – Lawlessness in Early Gold Rush Settlements

During the early 1840s, when settler numbers were low, lawlessness was rare. However, the **1849 Californian Gold Rush** changed this. Huge numbers of migrant **prospectors** came into the American West searching for their fortune. The population of California rapidly increased from 8,000 in 1846 to roughly 120,000 by 1850 and by 1855 it had reached 300,000 people. Such a population boom along with many other factors meant **lawlessness** became a significant issue. The **federal** (national) government were slow to respond and law enforcement officers struggled to keep control of violence, theft and social problems.

Lawlessness in California

GROWING MINING CAMPS

When gold was found, the camps grew very quickly and held thousands of people. This was too quick for the local officials to deal with the amount of crime when it happened.

PROSTITUTION

There were many prostitutes in the mining towns making their money from the men who had travelled alone. This resulted in significant drunken violence.

CON MEN

Experienced **prospectors** tried conning new, inexperienced prospectors into buying worthless land. They planted a few bits of gold on the land to make it look like a good buy but then bought the best land themselves.

VIOLENCE & ROBBERY

Some men attempted to rob other prospectors of their gold. Fights would break out which could become violent as most carried weapons such as pistols and knives.

ALCOHOL

Mining camps had many drinking saloons. Alcohol consumption among the men led to fights and arguments over money, land and women.

CLAIM JUMPING

Law said that the person who found the gold had a right to the land and the gold found there. But claiming gold became a competition and other men set out to steel land where gold was found. This was known as **CLAIM JUMPING**. This was difficult to prove with so few law enforcement officers.

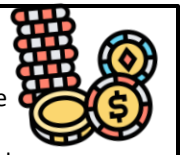
RACIAL TENSIONS

Prospectors from around the world mixed in the camps. This led to tension between different cultures. Famine in **China** led to a huge increase in Chinese migrants coming to California. By 1851 there were 20,000 Chinese migrants in California. They **competed** for jobs working in the mines but faced **racism** from Americans and Europeans.

GANGS IN SAN FRANSCISCO

Failed prospectors came to San Francisco. Desperate for money, gangs began to control the city and there was a particularly bad crime wave in 1851. Law officers could not deal with the violence. Gang members were known to walk into a saloon, kill people and casually leave.

THE MINING TOWN OF AURORA - CALIFORNIA



The mining town of **Aurora** grew from 800 people in 1861 to 14,000 by 1864. The population was mostly male and white, with a small Chinese community. There were around 300 women, but half were prostitutes. There was one school and a church. However, there were 25 saloons, just as many gambling houses, brothels and a large brewery.

The Early System of Law & Order in the American West

All new territories were under controlled by the **federal (or national) government**. However, these new territories only gained their own government, laws and a legal system when the population reached over 60,000. When a territory became an official 'state' it was given a **governor**, **three judges** to hear court cases and a **US marshal**. The US Marshall was the officer in charge of the state. Over a population of 5,000 communities could elect their own **sheriff**. The sheriff was responsible for law enforcement and tax collection. Sheriffs ran the jails and appointed their own deputies. They had no legal training but kept order as best as they could. In times of need, a sheriff or a US Marshall could also order other men in the community to join a **posse** to hunt down law breakers. A posse would be ordinary men, known to the sheriff and often used quite violent methods to catch any criminals. However, sheriffs were known to use violent methods and were open to bribery.

Tackling Lawlessness

GEOGRAPHY: Each territory covered a huge area of land with scattered settlements. A sheriff would have to cover up to 200,000km in his area. There were simply not enough officers to cover the vast areas of the West.

COMMUNICATION: The only form of transport was a horse or on foot. Any news of lawlessness travelled slowly which led to many crimes going unsolved.

POOR PAY: The government did not spend that much money on the new territories and so law enforcement officers were badly paid. This made it hard to recruit new officers and some officers were tempted into corruption and bribery – accepting money from criminals to avoid arrest.

LACK OF TRAINING: Officers had no official legal training. They often acted unfairly favouring their friends over others. This led to even more tension.

RACIST VIOLENT INCREASED: Racist attacks increased as a result of mass migration to settlements such as California – especially against the indigenous peoples and the Chinese migrants. Unfortunately, the American Government itself was also racist, and white Americans were encouraged to attack indigenous people and laws were passed that discriminated against Chinese migrants. Chinese and indigenous peoples were also banned from being witnesses in court.

Vigilante Groups

With so few law enforcement officers, communities set up their own **vigilante groups**. These were groups of **ordinary men** who set out to find and punish suspected law breakers themselves. Many mining camps set up vigilante groups and San Francisco had a vigilante Committee of around 200 people. They were successful and reduced the problems of crime in some communities. However, their version of a trial could be very unfair with many vigilante members being more violent than their suspects. They would often '**lynch**' or hang any person they suspected as being guilty.

Settling Mining Disputes

- Mining communities did not have easy access to the legal system such as judges and courts. This often made it difficult to solve issued about who had claimed which land.
- Local communities started to create their own courts with respected community members, but decisions could sometimes be biased and based on little evidence.

Settlement in the West – The Homestead Act (1862)

BACKGROUND EVENTS

The American Civil War 1861 - 1865

The American Civil War was fought between the northern states called the Union and the 7 southern states known as the Confederates. The North won and as a result, the 7 confederate states became part of the United States of America. After the Civil War, thousands of soldiers were **demobilised** (left the army) and returned home. However, former soldiers from the south found it difficult to return home. Much of the fighting had taken place in the south and the land and buildings had been devastated.

The Abolition of Slavery

Following the Civil War, President Lincoln passed a law called the **Emancipation Proclamation**. This officially ended slavery in America. Over 4 million African American people were freed. They looked to the American West as a place they could make a fresh start in life away from the racial discrimination which continued to exist in the south.

- President Lincoln passed the **Homestead Act**. This law allowed anyone (apart from indigenous peoples) to claim **160 acres of land** in the West, as long as they lived on and farmed the land for 5 years.
- This was another policy which aimed to encouraged further settlement in the American West.
- The Homestead Act gave African American people a right to buy and own land in America for the very first time. It also gave the former Civil War soldiers a chance to start a new life.

Why the Homestead Act?

- Before 1862, the American government had tried to promote and sell land in the West.
- However, it was too expensive for many American families and very few businesses were willing to buy so much land.
- The government needed to make the land more attractive and cheaper to encourage ordinary American to move from their homes in the east to set up a new life in the West.
- The result was the Homestead Act of 1862.

How did the Homestead Act work?

- The Homestead Act was a law which allowed **ordinary families** from elsewhere in America to buy up small chunks of land called a **Homestead** in the American West.
- Land was divided into small areas of **160 acres**. This would be enough land for a family to build a home and farm the land. However, it would be small enough to make the land affordable.
- The 160 acres only initially cost **$10** to 'make a claim' for the land. This meant that settlers could simply pay a **$10 deposit** and pay the government back for the rest at a later date. $10 was affordable for most.
- Once a claim had been made and the family lived there for 5 years, they could opt to buy the land for good for $30.

The Positive Impact

- Many families were encouraged to move into the American West because the cost of a claim was so low. This was far better than big businesses buying up vast areas of land and doing nothing with it. Lots of families resulted in vast numbers of people populating the West.
- By **1876, 6 million** acres of land was sold for homesteads.
- Eventually, over **80 million acres** of land were settled.
- It led to parts of the Great Plains being settled in for the **first time**.
- Half of **Nebraska's** land became Homestead Land and by 1875, the population was big enough for it to become a state in its own right.
- The government also promoted the Homestead Act abroad, especially Europe. By 1875 over half of Nebraska's population, 123,000, were also recent immigrants and their children. The government gave **300 million acres** of land to railroad companies. It would be the railroad that encouraged settlers to the West.

The Negative Impact

- Only 13 million acres of claims had been **bought** up by 1884. This was a result of the white settlers finding it very difficult to farm. The quality of land many homesteaders bought varied hugely with some families struggling to feed themselves before they could even think of making a profit from their crops or animals.
- Only **16%** of the land available from the government was finally bought up by Homesteaders in a final payment.
- **60%** of the homesteads were not 'proven up' (fully bought) because of the problems with farming.
- Despite the government's aim to encourage small families, **big businessmen** still found ways to buy up land for their own purposes. For example, cattle ranch owners would make their employees file individual claims for land and then hand over the rights to them to the ranch.

Who could buy land?

- Anyone over the age of **21**
- Former Civil War soldiers could be under 21 – even those from the Confederate states who wanted a new life in the West.
- Single **women** could file a claim
- Anyone from **abroad** who wanted to become an American citizen
- Any **African American** ex-slaves with money for the deposit.

KEY POINT: The only group not allowed to claim land were the indigenous peoples.

Overall Importance

- It encouraged a new start for many ex- soldiers, and African Americans after the Civil War.
- It dramatically increased the settlement of land in the American West.
- It was proof that the American government were keen to populate land in the west as much as possible.
- It proved the government were not interested in protecting the interests of the indigenous peoples.

Settlement in the West – The Transcontinental Railroad Act & Completion (1862-1869)

The US Government wanted to increase settlement into the American West. In 1862, they agreed to build a **transcontinental railroad** that would link the east coast of America with California & Oregon in the West. The 3,200 km railroad was finally completed in 1869. It had a significant impact on the development of the American West. The railroad was built by a mixture of Chinese and Irish immigrants as well as former-Civil War soldiers, European immigrants and freed slaves. Following the agreements made at the Fort Laramie Treaty, surveyors began to enter Indian Territory to survey the best route for the railroad. In 1862, the Pacific Railroad Act was passed which officially gave the go-ahead for its construction. By 1869 it had been completed with the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroad companies meeting in the state of Utah.

The Building of the Transcontinental Railroad

Two Railroad Companies

- The American government promised jobs and profit for the two railroad companies who were chosen to build the line - the **Union Pacific** and the **Central Pacific**.
- The companies had a lot of power over what could happen with the land they were given alongside the railroad tracks.
- The government promised they would use the US Army to protect railroad workers from possible Indian attacks.

Settlement

- Each railroad company had its own **Bureau of Immigration** which persuaded people from other countries to settle on the plains.
- Agent, **CB Schmitt** persuaded 60,000 Germans to emigrate to Kansas.
- The companies encouraged settlers from America and Europe to buy land near the tracks. They even put on special trips to show buyers the attractions of the land.

Investment

- The railroad companies were given **$16,000** for every mile of track built. This increased to **$48,000** for every mile for the hardest parts across the mountains.
- Overall, **$61million** was spent on its construction.
- However, around 1200 men died during its construction.

Telegraph Communication

- The government funded the building of the first transcontinental **electric telegraph**.
- This was a key communication line which ran alongside the railroad tracks.
- It allowed telegraph messages to be sent across the continent for the first time.

Land

- Railroad companies were given 6,400 acres of land alongside the railroad tracks which they could sell to other settlers and businesses.
- However, this equalled 45 million acres of land taken from the indigenous peoples.

The Impact on Settlers and Homesteaders

- Travelling west became easier, quicker & cheaper.
- Towns rapidly grew along rail stops on the route.
- Towns gave Homesteaders more social opportunities away from their isolated homesteads.
- Homesteaders and their families back in the east could now visit each other easily for the first time. This reduced the isolation they felt and gave an incentive for more family members to move west.
- The railroad also encouraged businesses to publish catalogues full of goods which were sent to families in in the American West. Families ordered goods which were then sent to their nearest railroad station.
- Homesteaders could now order farming resources like ploughs from the city and have them delivered via train to the nearest station.

Impact on Farming

- Farmers used the railroad to sell surplus crops to other parts of America. This gave them an income and allowed them to expand their farms.
- Farmers in California and Oregon could transport their grain to other parts of America, especially the big cities in the east.
- It allowed farmers to set up new business and trade links to help their farms expand.

Impact on the Cattle Industry

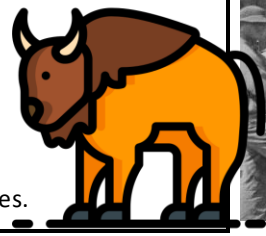
- The railroads encouraged the growth of the cattle industry and the new cow towns which grew near the tracks.
- It was now possible for cattlemen from Texas to sell their cattle for meat and leather .
- Cattlemen used rail to transport meat to the growing settlements in West like the new mining towns.

National Impact

- The government could now transport the army at short notice to deal with any issues with the indigenous tribes.
- There were huge trade benefits for the country as the railroad opened trade routes with Europe and Asia from the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.
- The creation of such a magnificent railroad made the idea of the Manifest Destiny seem real. It promoted confidence and hope.

Impact on the Indigenous Peoples

- Indigenous peoples moved away from the railroad routes as a precaution. It was alien to them and caused fear.
- The building also scared away the buffalo herds but also ate into the grassland which was essential for their survival. The tracks also created a barrier which blocked the natural migration of the herds.
- For the railroad workers and settlers, buffalo hunters were employed and killed vast numbers of the animal to provide meat.
- Buffalo hunting was promoted by the railroad companies. One buffalo hunter named **William Cody** claimed to have killed 4,280 buffalo over 17 months.
- Therefore, the railroad prevented indigenous peoples from living their traditional nomadic life.
- It was no surprise that indigenous attacks increased on the railroad workers and this in turn increased the tension between the settlers and the indigenous peoples.



Settlement in the West – Improvements in Farming Methods in the American West

The **Homestead Act** encouraged the settlement of the American West by allowing people to claim 160 acres of land for a small deposit of only $10. However, **60%** of these claims were not **proven up** (paid for in full). The land on the Great Plains was **incredibly difficult to farm** and therefore survive on. While some families who claimed land were fortunate with land, many others struggled, especially in the dry states of **Dakota**, **Nebraska** and **Kansas** in the Great Plains. We will examine the problems faced by the Homesteaders, and then look at how **inventors**, **farmers** and **manufacturers** tried to overcome these problems. It's important to know that most of the inventions were at first very expensive. This meant that it was only in the late 1870s that such inventions became cheaper and more widely used.

PROBLEM

SOLUTION

CONSEQUENCE

A lack of Timber

Homesteaders needed wood for building homes, fences to keep in their livestock and prevent crops from being eaten. Timber was needed for fire, fuel and heat – especially in the bitterly cold winters.

The Timber Culture Act (1873)

IMPORTANT

The Timber Culture Act allowed a homesteader to claim another 160 acres if they promised to plant trees on a ¼ of that land. More trees would act as a wind-break to slow down the winds of the Great Plains and shelter crops from damage.

The Invention of Barbed Wire (1874)

Barbed wire was invented by **Joseph Glidden**. It was a much better way to fence off crops to protect them from livestock and other animals. It was also an effective way to enclose livestock to prevent them from escaping.

Dried buffalo Dung - Buffalo Chips

When dried, it could be lit and used as fuel.

Slowly, sod houses were replaced with timber homes. 16 million acres of land had been claimed under the **Timber Culture Act** by 1878 with most of this land being taken up in Dakota, Nebraska & Kansas. However, many of the trees that were planted died due to the low rainfall. Only in Minnesota was there large increases in trees.

Barbed wire became cheaper than buying in timber, quicker to erect if damaged and effective at blocking livestock. However, it was not widely used until its price dropped by 90% by the 1880s. Early types of barbed wire also rusted quickly. Glidden became a millionaire, especially after new laws required homesteaders to fence off their land from roaming cattle.

Buffalo chips allowed families to cook and eat hot food. It was easily available.

A lack of Water

Rainfall on the Great Plains was low and there were few rivers or lakes. Water was needed to drink, clean, grow crops, keep land fertile and keep animals alive. The only real source of water on the plains was from natural springs deep below the ground which were difficult to access.

The Self-Governing Windmill (1854) and steel blades for windmills (1870)

Windmills were used to pump water out of the ground to help farmers water their land as well as use water for the family.

A newly invented windmill called **Halliday's windmill** could pump water out of deep wells up to **30 ft** deep. Stronger and more effective **steel blades** for the windmills were then invented in 1870. They could better stand up to the strong winds of the Great Plains which meant they needed repairing less. However, these pumps were still not powerful enough to collect water from the deeper springs, and they would need constant repairs. It was not until the 1880s that these windmills were developed further.

Dry Land

The dry, tough land often broke older ploughs which some homesteaders brought with them. They often got stuck in the deep, strong roots of the prairie grass. The land was too dry to grow important crops. The land was so dry that any sudden rainfall was likely to run off rather than soak into the soil.

The Sulky Plough (1875)

This was an easy to operate, ride on plough which was better at cutting through tough roots. In **1837 John Deere** invented a particularly strong steel plough which could deal with the tough prairie grass roots. It was known as the **Sod Buster**

It could plough up tough weeds and grass on the Plains. It made ploughing easier and quicker. 50,000 sulky ploughs sold in 6 years. However, they were very expensive for most farmers. Many farmers stuck with the older walk along ploughs which they were used to using and could repair themselves.

Poor Land

Not only was the land dry but it also lacked the nutrients to grow the crops that were needed to survive such as wheat and corn.

Turkey Red Wheat (1873)

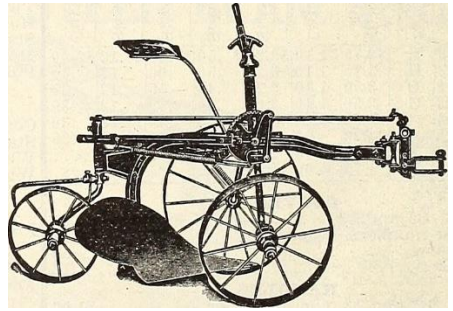
A railroad company persuaded a community from Russia to settle on the Great Plains. They were tough people who were used to farming similar land. They brought with them a type of wheat called 'Turkey Red'.

Turkey Red wheat grew well in the land of the Great Plains. Soon homesteaders were able to farm the wheat and then sell their grain for profit. It was a major boost for the homesteaders as well as the economy.

Natural Hazards

Insects such as grasshoppers would destroy crops quickly. Mountain locusts could strip a field of crops in hours. In 1874 was known as 'The Year of the Locust' as huge numbers devastated crops across Nebraska and Kansas. Due to the dry land, fires could be caused quickly, either by human error or lightning strikes during sudden storms.

There was no solution and in many ways the homesteaders simply had to learn to adapt to their new environment. Some struggled so much with their crops that they had to rely on donations of food and clothing from other states. The ongoing struggles like this put many homesteaders off from staying in the American West.



Settlement in the West – Tackling Lawlessness in the American 'Wild West'.

Causes of Lawlessness

The American Civil War

After the American Civil War men from both sides decided to make a fresh start in the American West. However, most held on to their guns. The soldiers often still felt bitterness towards the men who they fought against, and they found it difficult to readjust to normal life living alongside each other. Many were unemployed some found illegal ways to get money.

The Code of the West

With the absence of organised law & order, men lived by the belief that it was person's responsibility to settle arguments themselves and it was weak to back down. Arguments could end in shootings and if you shot someone in self defence this was not breaking the law if the other person was also armed. Violence often became the only way to settle arguments.

Competition & Rivalry

There was increasing conflict between the different migrant groups settling in the American West, especially over issues such as land and money. For example, between the homesteaders and the cattle ranchers, the Chinese, Mexican and European immigrants, the cowboys and the townspeople. All new settlers felt a threat from the indigenous peoples. This meant that most people were armed with weapons and ready to protect themselves from any attack.

Geography

The American West was a vast area with few transport routes apart from the railroads. Any attempt to catch criminals would be slow. Law enforcement officers had to travel huge distances to deal with crime. The training and pay for lawmen was often poor and some resorted to crime themselves.

Common Crimes

Highway and Stage-Coach Robbery

- **Stagecoaches** were used to transport people and goods between settlements.
- Travellers often carried huge sums of money and became a target for robbers.
- Stagecoach companies often had to hire armed guards or use the army to protect them.

Train Robbery

- In 1866, the first train robbery took place. The **Reno Gang** stole $13,000 from a railroad car when they broke into a safe.
- They struck again in 1868 and stole $96,000. From here, other gangs of outlaws robbed trains.
- As a result, railroad companies toughened train doors and hired armed guards.
- The Reno Gang were finally caught by vigilantes who went on to lynch them.

Bank Robbery

- As settlements grew, more banks were built. Some outlaws began to target banks to carry out robberies.
- **Jesse and Frank James**, ex Civil War soldiers carried out bank robberies across several states between 1866 – 76. It was only in 1882 when **Jesse James** was shot, and his brother **Frank** handed himself in.

Shootings

- Between 1866 – 1900 it is estimated that around 20,000 people died of shooting in the American West – roughly 600 a year.
- Some men became famous gunfighters such as **John Wesley Hardin** and **Wild Bill Hickock.**

Improved Methods of Tackling Lawlessness

National Federal Government

- The government appointed **US Marshalls** to oversee a state. From 1870, they were allowed to appoint a deputy to help them cover the vast areas of land.
- US Marshalls were allowed to bring in a local posse to help them hunt down criminals & build jails.

Local Government

Locals could appoint **Town Marshalls** who were chosen by the people of a town every year.

The US Army

Occasionally, the **US army** were ordered to intervene with tackling lawlessness.

Sheriffs

Sheriffs were elected by the people of a county for two years and often had to cover wide areas of land.

Vigilante groups

Vigilantes took the law into their own hands. There were over 200 such groups in the West. Their methods were often outside the law and just as violent as the criminals they were trying to catch. They often resorted to punishments such as shooting and lynching without evidence.

Pinkerton Detective Agency

This was a private company set up in 1850. It was hired by banks, railroad and stagecoach companies to provide protection for them. This was further proof of how little people trusted the law enforcement methods of the official authorities.

Lawlessness in Abilene, Kansas

From 1868, Abilene was a growing and prosperous **cattle town** located next to the railroad**.** It was the job of the cowboys to bring the cattle to the railroad at Abilene where they were loaded onto cattle trucks. After the hard months bringing the cattle over 1,600km to Abilene, the cowboys were finally paid. They celebrated in the **saloons**, the **gambling tables** and at the local **brothels**. In the winter, the population of Abilene was around 500. However, in the summer months with the arrival of the cowboys, it reached 7,000. Cowboys regularly had gun fights, and Abilene attracted further prostitutes and outlaws. Locals reacted to this by building a jail in 1870. However, the cowboys tore it down and even shot down the sign banning guns. Their wild behaviour was made worse as many cowboys were southerners who kept their support of the Southern Confederacy, but residents of Abilene were supporters of the Union North. Abilene's residents hired new Town Marshalls to tackle lawlessness. These towns were known as **Hell on Wheels** because of the number of violent criminals they attracted.

Thomas Smith (1870)

In **1870**, the Abilene's town leaders hired **Thomas Smith** as the new Town Marshal. Smith issued a ban on carrying guns and had a fierce reputation, using his boxing skills to knock out cowboys who caused trouble. However, by late 1870 he was shot and then killed with an axe while trying to arrest a suspected murderer.

'Wild' Bill Hickock (1871)

- Following Thomas Smith's death, the people of Abilene hired **'Wild' Bill Hickock** a former Civil War soldier. He was paid $150 per month but added to his income by gambling. Some residents disapproved of him as he drank too much and lived with a succession of prostitutes.
- However, he did keep the cowboys under control and enforced the ban on carrying weapons. Eventually however, in a gunfight, he killed a man and accidently killed his deputy. His contract was not renewed.
- Finally, the people of Abilene made it clear that the cattle and the cowboys were no longer welcome in Abilene and they moved to different towns along the railroad.

The Growth in Ranching and the Cattle Industry in the American West 1862-1876

The development of the cattle industry had a huge impact on the American West. With very few cattle on the Great Plains at the start of the 1840s, the industry developed quickly during the 1860s and 1870s. As a result, the cattle industry created many jobs and gave men the opportunity to make huge sums of money.The three main individuals who had an important impact on the development of the cattle industry were **Charles Goodnight**, **Joseph McCoy** and **John Iliff**.

STAGE 5: Goodnight and Loving Trail (1866)

- ❑ One solution was pioneered by **Charles Goodnight** and his partner **Oliver Loving**. When they returned to their ranch after the Civil War, their cattle herd had increased from 180 to 5,000.
- ❑ In 1866, instead of driving the cattle to the east, they set up their own trail named the **Goodnight-Loving Trail** into the **American West**.
- ❑ They discovered they could easily sell their cattle for food to feed the **US army** who were now based in the West.
- ❑ Other groups of settlers such as **gold miners**, **homesteaders** and the **railroad builders** also provided a market for Goodnight and Loving.
- ❑ They also sold the meat to feed the **indigenous peoples** who had been placed onto reservation land. By 1870, the US government were buying up to 60,000 cattle a year to give as rations in the reservations.
- ❑ They would also sell the cattle to the **Navajo Indians who were in desperate need of food**. They could sell 800 cattle for **$12,000** - four times as much as they would earn in Texas.
- ❑ By 1876, Goodnight was so successful that his Texas cattle ranch expanded to **1 million acres.**

STAGE 3: The American Civil War (1862 – 65)

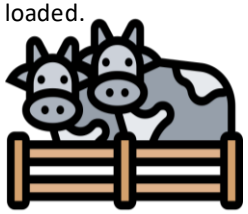
- ❑ When the American Civil War began; cattle ranching stopped. The cattle were left to roam freely the open plains of Texas. It was estimated that by the end of the Civil War, there were close to 5 million Texas Longhorns in Texas.
- ❑ However, with nobody to take care of them during the war, their meat quality was low, they were in poor health, and the price of cattle fell dramatically.

STAGE 1: Cattle in Texas: 1850s

- ❑ Cattle had originally been bred in the southern states of **Texas.**
- ❑ These **Texas Longhorns** were tough and could easily survive on the **open plain** – large areas of land with no fences.
- ❑ The cattlemen in charge of the cattle were called **cowboys**.
- ❑ In the 1850s, beef became a popular food, and Texan cattle ranchers became very wealthy.
- ❑ Cowboys herded the cattle and took them on **long drives** north. Long drives were when cowboys would take the cattle along **cattle trails**, hundreds of km long from Texas to states in the east of America such as **Missouri**.

STAGE 6: Joseph Mccoy's Chisholm Trail (1867).

- ❑ A further development in the cattle industry was made in 1867. Joseph McCoy, a cattle trader from Chicago realised that a small town on the railroad would be a perfect place to transport cattle from Texas. The town's name was **Abilene** in the state of **Kansas**.
- ❑ McCoy chose Kansas for three main reasons. Firstly, Kansas had now relaxed its rules about **Texas Fever** and allowed Texan cowboys to bring their cattle to the state. Secondly, there was **grassland** all the way from Texas to Abilene which meant the cattle could be well fed along the cattle drive. McCoy developed a cattle drive route called the **Chisholm Trail** to bring the herds of Texas Longhorns north. Finally, Abilene was right on the **railroad**, so cattle could be brought there and immediately loaded onto the cattle trucks ready to be transported to east coast cities like Chicago.
- ❑ McCoy used his **business skills** to buy land along the railroad track for **stockyards** where the cattle could be kept as well as build a **depot** where the cattle could be loaded.
- ❑ He built a **hotel** for cattle traders to stay and made sure that Abilene and the Chisholm Trail were clearly marked out for cowboys to use.
- ❑ He spent **$5,000 marketing** his new venture and sent riders down to Texas to tell the cattlemen all about Abilene.
- ❑ His new venture was a huge success. By 1867, 35,000 cattle had been driven up the Chisholm Trail and then 3 million between 1867 – 1872.
- ❑ Abilene became known as the first **cow-town** and McCoy became hugely wealthy.



STAGE 2: Texas Fever 1855

- ❑ It was soon discovered however that the Texas Longhorns carried a deadly disease called **Texas Fever**.
- ❑ If any cattle from states like Missouri mixed with the Texas Longhorns, the disease would spread, and the results would be fatal. Therefore, **Missouri** banned the Texas cattle drives in 1855.
- ❑ The state of **Kansas** then banned the cattle drives in 1859.
- ❑ Cattle could no longer go to these places, despite beef being in high demand.

STAGE 4: Post Civil War (1865)

- ❑ After the Civil War, the demand for beef increased again. Beef was in **huge demand** in north-eastern cities like Chicago.
- ❑ With so many cattle in the south, each cow was only worth **$5.** However, in the north, the cattle were worth **$40** each.
- ❑ Cities like this had developed industrialised meat processing plants which processed food quickly, easily & cheaply. The only problem was, getting the cattle from Texas to the east. Some cattle ranchers organised a large cattle drive to the east but they were prevented from crossing through the state of **Kansas** by farmers and homesteaders who were worried about **Texas Fever**.

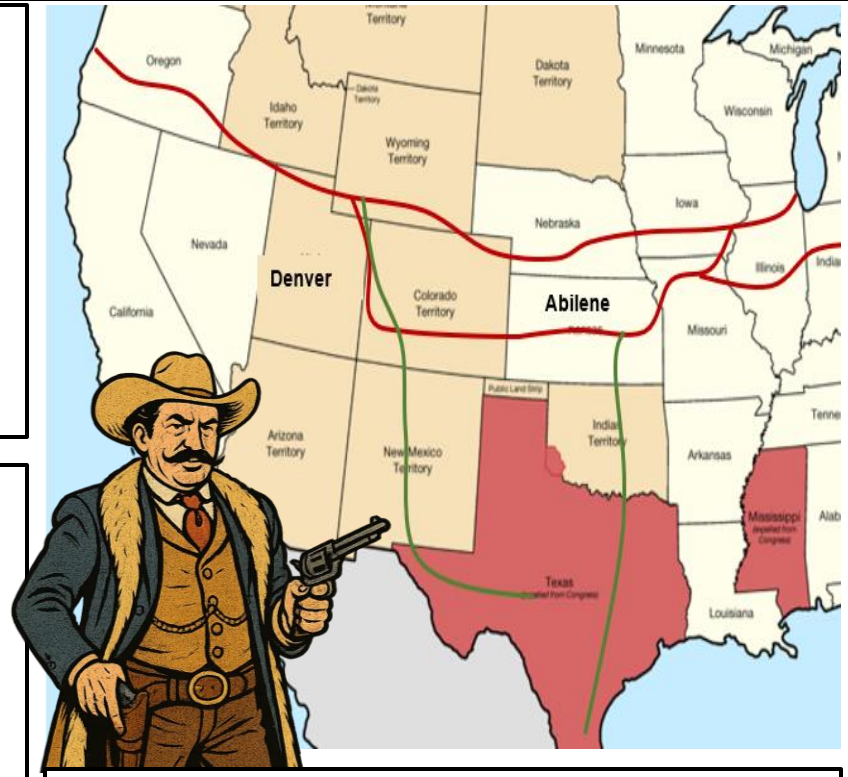
The Growth in Ranching and the Cattle Industry in the American West 1862-1876

Problems with the Cattle Drives

- ❑ While good money was being made using cattle trails like the **Chisholm Trail** and the **Goodnight –Loving Trail**, there were still some problems.
- ❑ Many **Homesteaders** who were beginning to settle on land in the American West were starting to refuse the cattlemen access through their land, making the cattle drives more difficult.
- ❑ The **long drive** from Texas exhausted many of the cattle. Many become **too thin** to sell for beef and prices of these over exhausted cattle fell.
- ❑ One man - **John Iliff** had the answer!

STAGE 7: John Iliff Ranching on the Plains 1870s

- ❑ John Iliff began to buy some of the less valuable cattle that could not be sold from Goodnight and Loving.
- ❑ He began to see if it was possible to look after, breed and rear healthier cattle on the grasslands of the American West, rather than bring them up from Texas.
- ❑ His idea worked – cattle were bigger and healthier!
- ❑ Iliff realised saw the demand for beef from the gold prospectors and the indigenous tribes who were running low on food.
- ❑ By 1870, Iliff built up his own herd in the state of **Colorado** in a town called **Denver**. He had over 26,000 cattle over 16,000 acres of land.
- ❑ He became Denver's first millionaire, selling beef to the **mining towns**, the **railroad workers** and to the **government** for Indian Reservations.
- ❑ What was important was that he had proven that it was possible to raise cattle on the Great Plains rather than bringing them all the way from Texas.
- ❑ This was the start of **cattle ranching on the open range**. The Open Range means a large area of unfenced land over which livestock would roam freely until the cowboys brought them in.



STAGE 8: The Rise of the Cattle Barons

- ❑ The 1870s saw a **beef bonanza** in the American West. In other words, vast amounts of money was being made from the cattle industry.
- ❑ Some long drives continued from Texas to towns such as Abilene in Kansas. However, more cattlemen were influenced by John Iliff and began cattle ranching on the Open Range of the Plains.
- ❑ The costs were low with free grass, cheap land and transportation by rail with high profits made from selling meat.
- ❑ A few wealthy men, backed by even wealthier investors, bought up vast areas of land to build their own cattle ranch.
- ❑ These so-called **Cattle Barons**, were wealthy, powerful and very influential. They even had influence over local politics as well as law and order – especially when it came to dealing with the crime of **cattle rustling** (stealing cattle).

The importance of Joseph McCoy

- ✓ He was the first to find a way for the cattle industry to make money after the American Civil War.
- ✓ He was the first to make use of the railroads to transport cattle east. He built stockyards for cattle near the railroads.
- ✓ He was the first see the potential of Abilene as a 'cow-town' which could open-up even more trade.
- ✓ He extended the Chisolm Trail all the way to Abilene to make it easier for other cattlemen and cowboys to use.
- ✓ He promoted the new Chisolm Trail in Texas by spending **$5000** on advertising it to other cattlemen.

The importance of Charles Goodnight

- ✓ He solved the problem of Texas Fever bans in Kansas and Missouri by driving cattle west.
- ✓ He realised that he could sell the cattle in the **American West** to help feed the starving indigenous peoples.
- ✓ He realised there was a huge market for meat from the growing **gold mining towns, railroad worker, US army** and **Homesteaders** in the American West.
- ✓ His success **influenced other cattlemen** to drive their cattle into the American West rather than drive them to the east.

The importance of John Iliff

- ✓ He was the first to raise cattle on the Great Plains rather than Texas. This led to large scale open range cattle ranching wh the cattle were not fenced off but allowed to roam free.
- ✓ The money he made, turned him into **Denver's first Millionaire**.
- ✓ He won a contract with the government to supply a 7,000 Sioux reservation with beef.
- ✓ He showed others that this could also be done and because of this the 1870s saw a '**Beef Bonanza**'. The men who dominated this industry were called **CATTLE BARONS**.
- ✓ They made huge profits, had lots of investment and were able to sell meat cheaply. These men were so powerful they also controlled local politics as well as lots of land.

The Changing Role of the Cowboys During the Development of the Cattle Industry

The original cowboys were Spanish *vanqueros* in Texas. The word **cowboy** came into use around the 1850s. They were the men who worked with cattle on the **cattle drives** and the **cattle ranches**. Most came from the southern states with 25% being African American and 12% Mexican. They were not well paid, and their life was tough. One of the many consequences of the growth of the cattle industry was the impact it had on the lifestyle and work of the cowboy. Originally, their work was in Texas, where the Texas Longhorn cattle were located before the American Civil War. Then, with the changes brought about by Goodnight & Loving and Joseph McCoy, they were responsible for 'driving' the cattle along cattle trails from Texas to places like Missouri, Abilene in Kansas or Denver in Colorado to meet the railroad. By the 1870s, John Iliff's development of ranching on the open plains changed the role of the cowboy once again.

The Role of Cowboys in Texas 1850s

Before the development of the cattle industry in the American West, the Texan cowboys would work on huge ranches which covered enormous areas of open land.

- In the **spring** and **summer months**, cowboys from several ranches worked together to round up the cattle that had been out all winter. Some cattle took a lot of finding over vast and difficult terrain.
- When the cattle were rounded up, cowboys **branded** them to identify the ranch they belonged to and delivered the new **calves**.
- Life on the Texas ranch was **hard** with most men in their 20s. In most ranches the cowboys lived in a **bunkhouse** with the other cowboys. This was more comfortable than living outdoors on the trails.
- There was little entertainment and the rules were strict. Charles Goodnight for example, banned gambling with dances being held in local ranches only once or twice a year.

- During the **winter**, when the cattle were free to roam, ranches didn't employ many cowboys. With little work, cowboys had to find other jobs such as working in bars to earn a living.
- Some rode from ranch to ranch to try and find some work. Those cowboys lucky enough to work in the winter, would repair equipment, check on stray animals and plan for the year ahead.

The Role of Cowboys on the Lond Drive & Cattle Trails 1860s

After Goodnight & Loving and McCoy began using cattle trails north, the life of the cowboys changed dramatically, and life became even harder. Cowboys still had to '**round –up**' the cattle on the large ranches in Texas along with the other jobs expected of working on a ranch. However, they then had to drive cattle along the long, dangerous cattle drives north.

The Dangers of the Cattle Drive Drive

- Driving cattle up the **Goodnight Loving Trail** to Denver took **6 months** and the **Chisholm Trail** to Abilene took **4-5**.
- It was a difficult job keeping the cattle together as large herds of **longhorn** cattle were easily **spooked** and this led to a **stampedes**. Any stampede would mean them running for long distances losing weight and being less valuable.
- There were often dangers such as getting cattle to move and swim across **rivers**, dealing with **snake bites** and **wild animals**.
- Another tricky task was to negotiate with **indigenous tribes** to cross their territory, guarding the herds from **theft** and fending off attacks.

How the Cattle Drive Worked

- Only **12-15 cowboys** were responsible for up to **3,000 cattle**. They worked in groups led by a **Trail Boss**. A Trail Boss would be paid around **$100** a month for the Chisholm Trail and other cowboys **$30** a month.
- They always took a **Chuck Wagon** which transported food, water and equipment. Every group had a **wrangler** who cared for the horses.
- Cowboys slept in the **open air** and took it in turns to stay awake and night to **guard** the animals.
- Sometimes they rose between **12 and 24 hours** a day in all weathers to meet the deadline they were given to reach the end of the trail.
- They were skilled horsemen and mainly young, single men who had to be **very fit** and **strong** to carry out the exhausting work.

The end of the Cattle Drive

- At the end of the trail, they reached the railroad where the cattle were put into boxcars. Here, the cowboys were **paid**. Cowboys would get drunk, go dancing with women, gamble and fight.
- Some cowboys often spent so much money they had to borrow more to return to Texas.
- They would then return to Texas ready for the next years long drive.

Cowboys on the Open Range of the Great Plains 1870s

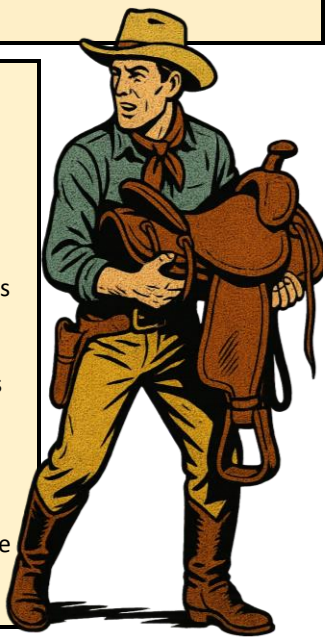
When ranches were built on the Plains by men like Iliff, the life of the cowboys changed once again. They no longer drove cattle from Texas. They still had to round up cattle from the Great Plains and take them to the railheads for transportation. However, this took days not months.

The Winter Months on the Open Range

- One of the biggest changes for the cowboys was to deal with the conditions they faced in the winter months.
- Cowboys had to ride out in all conditions such as blizzards to break up ice for the cattle to find grass and access drinking water. They might have to dig cattle out of snow drifts.
- Sometimes, the cowboys would have to stay out overnight and stay in simple **sod houses** or **cabins** dotted around the ranch.
- Some cowboys spent the winters on their own - a cold and lonely way of life.

Life on the Open Range

- There were fewer dangers on the open range, and it was now possible for the cowboys to be on the look out for **cattle rustlers** or **raids by indigenous peoples**.
- Like the days back in Texas, most ranch owners were **very strict** with the cowboys about their behaviour and insisted on discipline. They were banned from drinking, gambling, using guns and knives were banned.
- Compared to the cow towns like Abilene, the life of a cowboy on an Open Range ranch would be boring.
- Many cowboys found it difficult to change from their old lifestyle where they had freedom on the cattle trails.



The Relationship & Rivalry Between the Cattle Ranchers & Homesteaders

From the 1870s, open range cattle ranching brought another group of settlers to the American West – the cowboys and **cattle ranchers**. This further increased the competition for land on the Great Plains. Since the 1862 Homestead Act, thousands of **homesteaders** had bought up small areas land on the Great Plains. However, now that cattle ranching became profitable, wealthy cattle ranchers and cattle barons also began buying up huge amounts of public land for their ranchers and cattle. This led to significant **tension** and **rivalry** between the homesteaders and cattle ranchers.

These ongoing arguments put a strain on local law enforcement. While the cattle ranchers with all their money and influence tended to win any cases against the homesteaders in court, many issues were not dealt with and led to further tension and violence between the two groups. Eventually, the consequence of this was conflict in a series of 'range wars' like the Johnson County War of 1892

Reasons for Homesteader Anger Towards Cattle Ranchers

The homesteaders were angered by the amount of **public land** that the ranchers were buying up for their cattle. The Ranchers were legally allowed to use this public land, but the homesteaders believed they were being too greedy and not leaving enough land to share with others.

To protect their land, the homesteaders began fencing off their land. For example, land with access to water, woodland and natural springs would be fenced off and protected. The homesteaders argued that cattlemen were illegally using the **water** on homestead land for their cattle.

The Homesteaders disliked how rich and powerful some cattle ranchers were. If ever a dispute over land went to **court**, wealthy cattle ranchers and barons would always win. They often had more money to pay for the best lawyers but also had influence over the judges in their state.

The wealth of the cattle ranchers and barons also meant that they could buy the best land with access to natural resources such as water and timber – homesteaders felt this was unfair.

Homesteaders believed that they were being unfairly accused of **cattle rustling** (steeling cattle). Often, this led to cattle ranchers using violence against the homesteaders. For example, they would cut down homestead fences, use violence against them or take them to court.

The homesteaders were annoyed that the ranchers were not fencing off their cattle - remember that cattle ranching was open range at this time. Homesteaders complained that cattle entered their land, ate their crops and damaged buildings and equipment.

The homesteaders believed that ranch workers, called **ranch hands** were asked to buy land through the **Homestead Act** pretending that this was for their own family's use. However, once this land had been bought, the land would be handed over to the ranch owner to expand the ranch even more. This was not illegal but went against the spirit of the Homestead Act and annoyed the original homesteaders.

Reasons for Cattle Rancher Anger Towards Homesteaders

Ranchers needed a **lot of land** so cattle could feed on the open range where **grass** was available. They became frustrated with the homesteaders who they accused of deliberately trying to **block** them by buying up more land around a ranch.

Ranchers argued that their cattle had a **right to roam** freely on the open plains, after all, this is what was bringing vast amounts of money to the area. They argued it was the responsibility homesteaders to **fence off** their own land to protect their crops from being eaten or tramples by the cattle.

Cattlemen argued with many homesteaders who were also sheep herders. Both groups were in competition over the use of land for their animals to graze. Cattle ranchers claimed that the sheep brought in diseases such as '**sheep scalp**'. They also argued that the sheep ate too much of the grass, leaving nothing left for the cattle. Both sheep herders and cattle ranchers began to fence off their land to stop the other using it.

However, both groups also began to cut down these fences in protest. There were **violent clashes** between the ranchers and sheepherders. Some attacks resulted in several deaths in the 1870s. Some sheep farmers fenced off their herds, but these were taken down by the cattle ranchers who had more power and influence.

The Impact of Railroads, the Gold Rush and Cattle Industry on the Indigenous Peoples

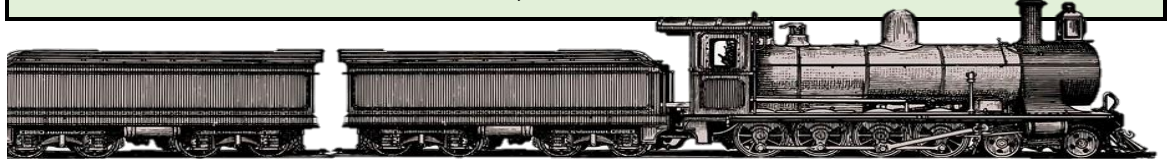
While the building of the railroads, the Californian Gold Rush and the development of the cattle industry were all good news for the settlers and the American Government, they all had a dramatic impact on the traditional lives of the indigenous peoples. However, at the time, the impact of these developments on Indigenous peoples was often forgotten or ignored. Therefore, tensions increased between indigenous tribes and members of the settler communities. These tensions would eventually result in conflict.

Impact of the Railroad on Indigenous Peoples

- Many indigenous tribes had agreed to the terms of the **Fort Laramie Treaty** in 1851. They agreed to allow **railroad surveyors** and **construction teams** to enter their land.
- However, the indigenous leaders had never been made aware of the impact this would have.
- Furthermore, unknown to the indigenous peoples, the American government, gave huge **grants** of money to the railroad companies to help them buy up vast areas of land around the railroad lines which they would then develop – this was meant to be '**Indian Territory**'.

Consequences

- The railroad created a **natural border** which stopped the natural migration of the **buffalo**. This meant that buffalo herds were now unable to access new grasslands for **grazing**. With less grassland, the health of the buffalo suffered, and the size of buffalo herds reduced.
- The railroads prevented tribes from **hunting** the buffalo they relied on so much. As many buffalo had to find new grasslands, it was more difficult for the indigenous peoples to locate the **buffalo herds**, especially with the barrier of the fenced off railroad.
- Railroad companies began to advertise and encourage **buffalo hunting**. Hunters boarded trains with their guns and when they came across a buffalo herd, would get off and hunt. Some hunters hunted from the train itself. This led to the **massive slaughter** of the buffalo which eventually resulted in their extermination.
- As part of the **Pacific Railroad Act**, the American government began to gradually take away the indigenous peoples' **rights to land** along the railroad routes. As land was bought for the railroads, some tribes were forced off their land and forced into **reservations**. In 1870, the **Pawnee Tribe,** who had been friendly to the US Government, agreed to move onto a reservation which was not even part of their spiritual homeland. They agreed to do this as they were promised they would be protected by the government. They were also promised food and equipment which rarely arrived.
- The **Northern Pacific Railroad** ran through **Dakota** and **Montana** territories where thousands of indigenous peoples still lived. However, the railroad was given **40 million** acres of land which it could sell to settlers. Therefore, even more tribes were forced off their lands.

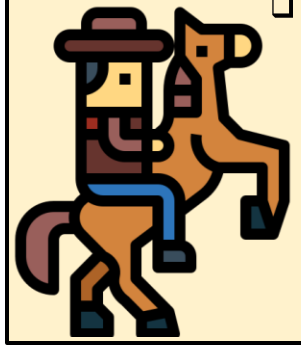


Impact of the Cattle Industry

- The success of the cattle industry led to more settlers entering the American West like ranchers and cowboys.
- It also led to millions of cattle being bred and ranched on the plains of states such as Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Montana and Dakota.

Consequences

- Cattle and buffalo ate the same diet - **grass**. Therefore, as the number of cattle increased on the Plains, the number of buffalo decreased. From just **130,000** cattle in the West in 1860, by 1880 there were **4.5 million** cattle across many new states.
- **Cattle trails** from Texas disrupted the life of indigenous tribes. Tribes began to organised patrols to watch out for who was using the trails. Some tribes like the **Comanche** disliked trespassers on their land, attacked the cowboys and stole horses and cattle in raids. This resulted in the **US army** being brought in to protect the cowboys. The army would sometimes ride out to attack the tribes which made **tensions** even worse.



- Some indigenous men who struggled to hunt buffalo went to work as **cowboys** or work on ranches. This was a more settled life for the indigenous peoples, but it took them away from their **traditional lifestyle**. It meant that they worked for money and had to rely on the ranch for employment.

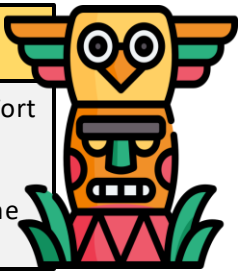
Impact of Gold Prospecting

- The **1849 Californian Gold** attracted thousands of prospectors wanting to get rich.
- The attitude of these men meant that they had **no respect** for the Indian lands or people.
- Mining towns developed quickly with thousands of prospectors arriving once they heard of gold.

Consequences

- Some indigenous peoples were **murdered** by greedy Californian prospectors.
- Some indigenous tribes were forcibly **moved away** by prospectors who believed they were getting in the way of their gold.
- The migration of men from all over the world brought in **new diseases** which quickly spread among the indigenous peoples and led to thousands of deaths.
- Mining towns grew quickly with permanent buildings such as churches, schools, saloons, stores and hotels. These buildings were all alien to the indigenous peoples who were witnessing the **landscape** they had lived in for years rapidly change.
- Treaties such as the Fort Laramie Treaty were quickly broken with any hint of gold in an area.
- In 1862, gold was found in Montana Territory. The quickest way for prospectors to get there was through protected Lakota Sioux land using a trail called the **Bozeman Trail**. So many settlers trespassed across the land to use the trail that it eventually it led to a conflict known as **Red Cloud's War** in 1866.

The Impact of US Government Policies Towards the Indigenous Peoples



By the 1860s, it was clear that the American government were encouraging more settlers West. As a result, previous agreements such as the first **Fort Laramie Treaty (1851)** were being broken. The Fort Laramie Treaty had **promised** yearly payments called **annuities**, **food**, and **equipment** to the indigenous peoples. It also promised **protection** from attacks by white settlers and guaranteed that tribes would not lose any more land. Indigenous tribes were **manipulated** into agreeing not to cross any borders into lands owned by railroad companies or the US government. However, the indigenous peoples did not understand the idea of a border line as their lifestyle relied on the migration of buffalo. Their continued movement into prohibited land meant that the US government could accuse the indigenous peoples of breaking the terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty and punish them. As a result, more tribes were moved onto **reservation** land and forced to live with even more restrictions.

What were Reservations?

- ❑ The US Government placed tribes **into reservations**. Reservations were large areas of **enclosed land** guarded by the US Army.
- ❑ Tribes were expected to live within reservation borders under the control of the US government agents.

Why did Plains Indians agree to move to reservations?

- ❑ Many indigenous tribal leaders often agreed to move onto reservations rather than be forced there. They agreed because the tribes' councils believed there was no other way for the tribe to survive.
- ❑ They believed in promises the US government made about being protected and supplied with **food** and **goods**.
- ❑ The American government also told the indigenous peoples that they could continue to **hunt** on their traditional hunting grounds before returning to the reservations.

Broken Promises

- ❑ It soon became clear that the US government rarely kept their promises.
- ❑ Over time, tribes learnt of the **broken promises** and either refused to move onto reservation land or simply walking away from the reservation land that they had been placed on.

Forced onto Reservation Land

- ❑ As a result, the **US army** was increasingly used to **force** indigenous peoples into or return them back to reservation land.
- ❑ This further increased tensions between the indigenous tribes and the US Army.
- ❑ It also led to rising tension and conflict with **government reservation agents** within the reservations themselves.

Impact of the Policy of Using Reservations

The government saw reservations as a method to control the indigenous peoples. They hoped that reservation life would encourage indigenous peoples to learn about farming, Christianity, for indigenous children to be taught to read and write in English and be taught American traditions.
However, reservation life had dramatic consequences for the indigenous peoples:

- ❑ The government showed no understanding of the nomadic or traditional lifestyle of each tribe. Reservations were sometimes a **long distance** from the tribe's **sacred** places.
- ❑ Sometimes traditional **tribal enemies** were placed on the **same** reservation. For example, the **Apache** and **Navajo** Indians were placed on the same reservation land.
- ❑ Reservations often had very **poor farmland,** so crops failed. This in turn meant the indigenous people lost their independence as they were forced to rely on the US Government for food.
- ❑ Reservations were run by a **corrupt** and **cheating** organisation called the Bureau Of Indian Affairs. The **agents** who ran the reservations were white Americans who took advantage of their power to make themselves wealthy. Their racist attitudes meant that Reservation Agents cared very little for the indigenous peoples under their care and protection.
- ❑ **Indian chiefs** agreed to reservation life but could not force others in the tribe to stay on the reservation. Often **young warriors** would wander off to hunt and had to be brought back by the US Army. They would then be punished for this by reservation agents who withheld food to the tribe.
- ❑ Reservation land was often **reduced in size** as white settlers complained that they needed more land in the American West. The US Government gave in to this demand which made it more difficult for the indigenous peoples to survive.

President Grant's 'Peace Policy' 1868

As tensions increased, **President Grant** put forward a **Peace Policy** to try to improve the way the reservations were managed. He tried to replace some corrupt reservation agents with religious men, specifically **Quakers** who were known for fairness and peace. He offered **$2 million** to make sure indigenous peoples were well cared for on the reservations. He even appointed a leader from indigenous descent called **Ely Parker** as a Commissioner of Indian Affairs. However, the efforts of the Peace Policy were limited and even Ely Parker stated that the indigenous tribes peoples should be treaty as 'helpless and ignorant wards (children).

Second Fort Laramie Treaty (1868)

- ❑ As a consequence of a conflict known as **Red Cloud's War**, the government agreed to close the **Bozeman Trail** which prospectors had been using to access gold on sacred indigenous lands.
- ❑ The treaty promised that this Great Sioux Reservation was only for the Sioux people.
- ❑ In response, Red Cloud agreed to move his Sioux tribe to a reservation in Dakota which included the sacred lands of the **Black Hills**. The Sioux also agreed not to attack white settlers.
- ❑ However, some Sioux chiefs like **Sitting Bull** and **Crazy Horse** refused to move as they did not trust the government's promises.

Indian Appropriation Act 1871

- ❑ This law stated that any indigenous person who refused to move to a reservation was to be treated as **hostile** and that the **force of the US Army** could be used against them.
- ❑ The law stated that indigenous tribes would no longer be recognised as 'independent' - therefore they were all under the control of the US law.
- ❑ This made it even easier for the US government to take their land.

Conflict – Little Crow's War, Sand Creek Massacre & Red Cloud's War

Little Crow's War 1862

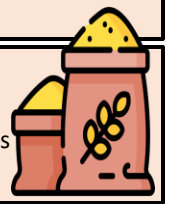
Tribe & Chief: The Dakota Sioux led by **Chief Little Crow**

Cause of Tension
- ❑ The **1851 Fort Laramie Treaty** promised **$1.4 million** to the Sioux and yearly payments of $80,000 if they went onto a **reservation**.
- ❑ However, in 1858, the Dakota Sioux had to sign away **half** of their reservation land to the government to pay off the debts they had.
- ❑ Little Crow said to the government: 'you promised us that we should have this land forever but now you take half away'.
- ❑ Little Crow still believed this would mean security for his people.
- ❑ However, settlers continued to **trespassed** through Sioux land and buffalo numbers dropped leaving them with even less food.

What the Dakota Sioux wanted:
- ❑ Little Crow wanted his people to have the safety to hunt the buffalo they needed on their land as well as the money promised them.

The problems:
- ❑ The government refused to hand over the $1.4 million until the Sioux had paid their debt. However, by 1862, the Sioux struggled to farm the reservation land and were starving.
- ❑ Some of the tribe tried to hunt for food outside the reservation but were punished by the reservation agents who charged them even more money for food. Eventually, some of the tribe resorted to eating grass to survive. Meanwhile, the reservation agents had a full storehouse of food and refused to give any to the Sioux.

The actions of the Dakota Sioux – Little Crow's War



Some of the tribe began raiding the reservation agency storehouses to get food. They then began attacking settlers and 600 settlers and US soldiers were killed in fighting.

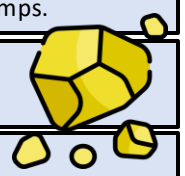
The Consequences
- ❑ The families of the killed white settlers wanted revenge for the Sioux attacks**. 400 Sioux were arrested**, and **38 Sioux men were executed**.
- ❑ The rest of the Dakota Sioux were placed into even worse reservation land called Crow Creek where farming was impossible.
- ❑ Many **starved** to death in the winter of 1862.

Sand Creek Massacre 1864

Tribe & Chief: The Cheyanne led by **Chief Black Kettle**

The Cause of Tension
- ❑ The **1851 Fort Laramie Treaty** had promised to protect Cheyanne land.
- ❑ However, when gold was discovered in Colorado in 1858, settlers began crossing their land, scaring buffalo & setting up mining camps.

What the Cheyanne and Black Kettle wanted:



- ❑ They wanted their land protected from prospectors.

What did the US Government promise?
In the **Treaty of Fort Wise (1861)**, Black Kettle agreed to move reservation land with the promise of protection from settlers from the US army.

The problems:
- ❑ After hearing of Little Crow's war, the Cheyanne did not trust the government. Young warriors known as **dog soldiers** refused to move to the reservation. Over 3 years they were so desperate for food that they attacked trains and stole food from settlers. Black Kettle set up camp at **Sand Creek** where he believed he was protected by the army.

How did the US Army deal with the Cheyanne in Sand Creek?
The local governor of Sand Creek was determined to '**kill and destroy**' the '**hostile Indians'**. He appointed **Colonel Chivington**, a Civil War hero to deal with them. Chivington & **700 cavalrymen** attacked Black Kettle's tribe at Sand Creek. Despite **Black Kettle waving a white flag** to surrender, the army massacred **130** men, women and children. They **scalped** the Indians & took body parts to display in local saloons as a show of strength.

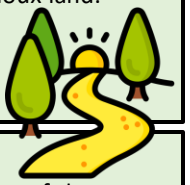
The reaction of the Cheyanne
- ❑ Black Kettle told other tribes about the actions of the US army & informed them that the US government should not be trusted.
- ❑ They went on to attack forts and kill US soldiers & white settlers.

The Consequences of the Sand Creek Massacre
- ❑ The government put the tribe on **half** the size of reservation land they were promised before. They limited buffalo hunting and restricted their movement. The tribe were promised **compensation** payments for the deaths at the Sand Creek Massacre – a promise that was never kept.

Red Cloud's War 1866-68

Tribe & Chief: The Lakota Sioux led by **Chief Red Cloud**

The Cause of Tension
- ❑ The **1851 Fort Laramie Treaty** promised to protect Sioux land.
- ❑ Red Cloud was angered when prospectors began using a trail called the **Bozeman Trail** through their lands. Red Cloud wanted the Bozeman Trial to close.



What did the US Government promise?
- ❑ They promised that if the Lakota Sioux allowed the use of the Bozeman Trail, they would get money, and they were promised that the size of their land would be protected.

The problems:
- ❑ Red Cloud had been warned by Little Crow not to trust any government promises. He then discovered that the army were building up the Bozeman Trail even more without being warned.

What did Red Cloud decide to do about it?
- ❑ Red Cloud decided to fight rather than trust the government.
- ❑ His tribe attacked workers and soldiers on the Bozeman trail who were building more army forts.
- ❑ He united with other Sioux chiefs, **Sitting Bull** and **Crazy Horse.**
- ❑ This was significant as it was the **first time the tribes had united** against the US government.

Red Cloud's War
- ❑ Over 3,000 indigenous warriors fought only 700 US army troops.
- ❑ The Lakota Sioux sent out **2 scouts** who were deliberately spotted by the US army. The scouts led **80** US army soldiers into a trap. The US army, under the leadership of **Captain William Fetterman**, were then surrounded by the Sioux. He and his 80 men were killed in what was then known as '**Fetterman's Trap**'.

The consequences of Red Cloud's War
- ❑ The US Government and army were **humiliated** by their defeat.
- ❑ They agreed to close the Bozeman Trial but only because another route to the gold had been found.
- ❑ Red Cloud agreed to the **Second Fort Laramie Treaty** in 1868 which set up a **Great Sioux Reservation**. However, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse refused to sign another treaty.

Continued Settlement 1876-1895: The Impact of New Technology & Farming Methods

The first pioneer settlers into the American West faced huge challenges with tough dry soil, extreme weather and a lack of access to water and timber. Farming land effectively enough to survive proved a challenge too far with many homesteaders selling up. However, with the expansion of the railroad, homesteaders and farmers were able to buy a wider range of new machinery and crops to make farming easier. The US Government, who were keen to further expand settlement in the West, also invested huge amounts of money in developing new technology to help the settlers. This was significantly helped by the events of a period of **industrialisation** taking place across America. Consequently, by the late 1870s, farmers and homesteaders were beginning to transform the once baron Great Plains into rich and fertile farmland.

Dry Farming

- Dry farming was a new technique which aimed to keep as much **water** in the dry soil of the plains as possible. It was developed in **1879** by a Dakota farmer named **Hardy Webster Campbell**.
- It was intended to help farmers **prepare** their soil to grow a wider range of crops.

Importance/Consequences

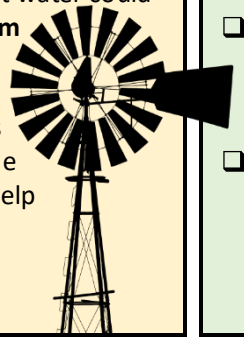
- It allowed soil to trap more water. This meant that once a crop was planted, its roots could grow stronger and longer and gain better access to water deep underground.
- Farmers found that dry farming worked well with the **Turkey Red Wheat** which was introduced during the 1870s.
- With more wheat, more **flour** could be milled by windmills creating more **food** for the settlers. The additional food grown from dry farming meant farmers could then sell their crops. This was an important factor to improve the trade and economy of the West.
- More homesteaders began to use the technique with successful results.
- Knowing that the technique worked also attracted further settlers into the West.

Steel Wind Pump

- By the 1870s, many farmers still gave up their land due to the lack of **water**.
- However, **Daniel Halliday** invented a new **metal bladed** wind pump which was stronger and more efficient.
- This was later improved by adding **steel** to the metal blades for added strength.

Importance/Consequences

- Steel blades better designed to rotate with any **wind direction**. This was useful to deal with the strong winds on the Plains
- It meant fewer blades **broke.** This avoided expensive and time-consuming repairs.
- The metal blades were **more efficient** for farmers as they only needed **oiling** once a year, compared to the older wooden blades which would have needed oiling every week.
- The strong blades mean that water could be accessed as deep as **100m** underground.
- In the longer term, both homesteaders and ranchers were able to make use of the new wind pump blades to help them access water for themselves, their crops and their animals.

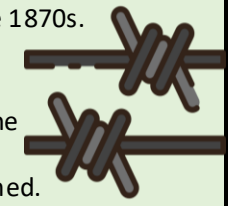


Safety Barbed Wire

- Early barbed wire were expensive and easily prone to **rust**.
- However, during the 1880s, it was coated in **plastic** to prevent rusting.
- Barbed wire became **mass produced** and so prices fell.
- It could easily be **transported** via railroad.

Importance/Consequences

- Timber was still in short supply, so barbed wire was used to **protecting** crops from animals like cattle and the buffalo.
- It was a useful way for ranch owners and homesteaders to clearly show the **boundary** of their land to avoid/settle disputes.
- The plastic coating not only lasted longer but fewer animals were harmed if they were caught up in it.
- The **cost** reduced so much that most homesteaders and ranchers could easily afford to use it on their land.
- The barbed wire reduced **lawlessness** as it provided an effective way to stop **cattle rustling** which had increased in the 1870s.
- In the long term it encouraged **more settlers** to the American West in the knowledge that they could protect the land they claimed.



Mechanisation

- The settlement of West came just as America experienced its own **industrial revolution**. **Inventors** and **manufacturers** were keen to make good money designing and making machinery which could help farmers in the West.
- **Machines** helped the 'dry farmers' prepare their soil.

Importance/Consequences

- **Mechanised ploughs** could reach deeper into the soil.
- **Seed drills** were developed which automatically planted seeds at the right depth.
- New **flour mills** meant that the abundance of Turkey Red wheat could be milled quickly and used for food.
- The strong steel plough invented by **John Deere** in the 1830s was further strengthened by **James Oliver**.
- These inventions made farming **faster**, more **efficient** and more **productive**. As a result, farmers produced more and could make far more **money** from sales.
- Trade became vital between the farmers in the American West and the big industrial manufacturers in the big cities of the east. This therefore further helped the US economy.

- It encouraged further settlement of the American West.
- It increased the areas of land that could be farmed as well as increased crop yields.

Changes to the Cattle Industry – The Winter of 1886/7 & the end of the Open Range

Cattle Industry so far…

1850s: **Texas Longhorn** cattle mainly ranched in **Texas.**

1861: The American **Civil War** results in cattle herds being left to multiply. Cattle herds in poor condition.

1865: After the Civil War, the **demand** for beef increases in the north.

1861: Cattle still banned from entering some states such as Kansas and Missouri due to **Texas Fever**

1866: **Goodnight & Loving** Trial moves cattle instead to the West (reservations, army forts, mining towns and railroad builders).

1867: **Joseph McCoy** uses the Chisholm Trail to drive cattle to **Abilene**. Stockyard are built at the railhead where cattle is transported to the east.

1871: **John Iliff** begins ranching on the **open range** in the West removing the need for long cattle drives.

1875: **Refrigerated** railroad cars developed. Ranched beef can now be sold to distant markets easily.

1876: The cattle industry experiences a **beef bonanza**. Investors support ranching on the Plains. **Cattle barons** gain huge wealth and influence.

Unfortunately, by the 1880s, so much money went into cattle ranching on the Plains that cattle became **overstocked**. There were too many cattle feeding on the same areas of grassland. With too many cattle to sell, the price of cattle fell. Why?

OVERSTOCKING
Too many cattle were grazing on the same amount of grass. This led to the grass eroding.

OVERGRAZING
Grass did not have time to re-grow once eaten. Cattle did not have enough to eat, and the land dried up.

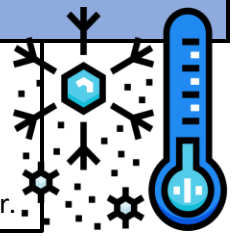
POOR CONDITION
With less grass, the cattle became weaker. This produced poorer quality meat to sell.

LESS PROFIT
By 1882, profits were going down. Ranchers kept the cattle just in case the prices increased again. Hence, even more cattle.

A FALL IN DEMAND
With so much beef available for cities in the east, prices reduced. Cattle ranchers received less money

EXTREME WEATHER
When **drought** hit in **1883**, the grass dried even more. Prairie **fires** from storms also reduced the grass further.

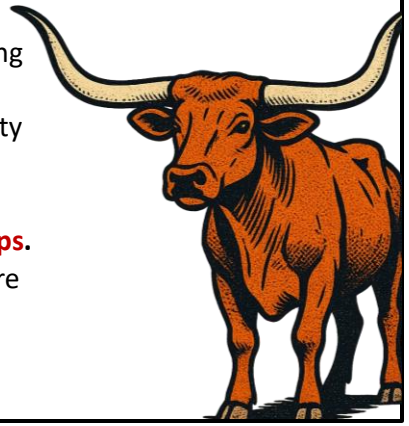
The Great Winter Die Up 1886/7



The winter of 1886/7 was harsh with temperatures falling to **-55 degrees**. Cattle were already weaker due to overstocking but now they struggled to get to the grass through the **deep snow and ice**. At least **15%** of the open range cattle died which led to thousands of lost cattle. With weak or dying cattle, many cattlemen and their ranches became **bankrupt**. The stock that did survive into the spring of 1887 were in **poor condition,** but everyone tried to sell what they had – this made beef prices even lower. The larger ranches which had made huge profits in the 1870s had the most problems – the area they had to cover to save their cattle was too large. The smaller ranches, with cowboys able to locate and save their cattle coped much better.

The only way for cattle ranches to survive was to end ranching on the huge areas of the open range. Cattleman began to develop much smaller ranches instead as they had more control over their cattle.

- Smaller herds could be **easily found** in bad weather for food and shelter.
- Smaller ranches were a lot easier to manage, to keep a watch on cattle and make sure they were well fed and watered.
- More **homesteaders** took over cattle ranching as they could keep cattle on their small area of land. This gave more people an opportunity to make a living from cattle ranching.
- Smaller ranches would provide water easily during drought with better metal **wind pumps**.
- Smaller ranches were easier to guard so there was a reduced amount of **rustling**.
- Smaller ranches meant **higher quality meat** which led to **higher prices** and profit.



Consequence of the end of the Open Range for Cowboys

The Great Winter Die Up had consequences for the cowboys as well as the ranch owners.

- It meant that there was much **less demand** for the cowboys.
- Those who remained were just employed as basic **ranch hands** during the spring and summer and many had to seek other employment over winter.
- Their lives were far **less adventurous** with far **less freedom**. All they needed to do was to **brand** the cattle, look after their horses and the calves, repair barbed wire fences and inspect the grasslands.
- They were mainly responsible for '**Riding the Line**' which meant patrolling the boundary of the ranch.
- They lived in **bunkhouses** which were often not very comfortable and poorly maintained.

Continued Settlement – The Exoduster movement to Kansas 1879

Settlers continued to migrate to the American West in the 1870s for many of the same reasons they had in the 1840s. For example, they still followed the idea of the **Manifest Destiny** - the belief that white Christian people had a God given right to land in the West. This later led to the US government forcing indigenous tribes onto reservation land to allow for further settlement. By 1879, another settler group arrived in the American West known as the **Exodusters**. These men, women and children were **newly freed slaves** from former Civil War Confederate states in the South. In 1863, President Lincoln passed a law called the Emancipation Proclamation which legally ended slavery across America - Over 4 million black Americans were freed. The **1862 Homestead Act** also gave former slaves the opportunity to claim homestead land in the American West – miles away from the more racist states in the South.

The **Exoduster Movement**. '**Exodus**' is a mass movement of people and '**dust**' refers to the dry areas of Kansas they moved to.

The Causes & Key Events of the Exoduster Movement

Racist attitudes continued in the Former Confederate states of the South

People in the former Confederate states in the South struggled to accept that black Americans should be freed from slavery. They did everything they could to restrict the rights and freedoms of black Americans. Black Americans were banned from voting, stopped from buying land and often intimidated and threatened into working in similar slave conditions known as **sharecropping**. It was clear that black American families were not made to feel welcome in the south and they looked to settle elsewhere.

The Influence of Benjamin Singleton

Benjamin Singleton was a former slave who moved to **Kansas** in 1873. He **promoted** the idea of black migration and encouraged former slaves to move. He promoted migration to Kansas at meetings and in newspaper adverts published in the southern states. He helped hundreds of black Americans move. Singleton even declared 'I am the whole cause of the Kansas Immigration'.

The Influence of Henry Adams

Another individual was American **Henry Adams**. He promoted the idea of black migration to the American West. It was obvious that moving away from the southern states was a priority for many black Americans and their families and many were inspired by him.

The Homestead Act

The Homestead Act made it clear that 'ex slaves' had to right to claim homestead land. They could do this for as little as $5. For some, this sum of money was affordable, and many took up the offer.

Rumours

Black Americans heard a rumour that the American government had specifically given **Kansas** for former slaves to settle in. This was not true but by 1879, **40,000** had set off for Kansas, Missouri and Illinois with a belief they would be welcomed there.

A New Start

Black Americans wanted to **move away** from somewhere they had been kept as slaves. They wanted **better jobs** and a chance to build a new life with a fresh start.

Religion

The second book of the **bible called Exodus** taught black Americans that migration would be helped by God who would provide protection for them and help them escape oppression. This gave them religious inspiration.

Positive Consequences of the Exoduster Movement

- By 1880, there were over **43,000** black Americans in Kansas. Some settlements in Kansas were even established by black Americans themselves. This gave them independence, & a sense of belonging.
- The **US Government** used Kansas state funding to help the Exodusters get set up with homes, work & resources.
- Many Exodusters had travelled through areas affected by **yellow fever** and were very ill. Despite this, the **Kansas government** helped them by setting up quarantine areas for them to stay in until they recovered.
- The Exodusters were generally **better off** than they had been in the South, and many reported that the **attitudes** towards them were more welcoming and positive.

Negative Consequences of the Exoduster Movement

- Other settlers in Kansas had already taken the best **farmland**. This left the Exodusters with poor farmland in the Kansas Uplands.
- Despite the claim for land being cheap, some struggled to pay all the **administrative payments** for their land and had to rely on local charities for help. As the exodus was unplanned, the local government and charities struggled to help all the Exodusters.
- There was more opposition to the Exodusters than they imagined. Many white Americans in Kansas thought the Exodusters should not be helped and should return to the South. They believed it was wrong that the Kansas State Government helped the Exodusters and not the settlers who were already there and already struggling. Part of this was due to racist attitudes.
- Some Exodusters filtered back to the southern states or elsewhere in the American West.
- Many Exoduster migrants remained **poorer** than white settlers in Kansas.

The Oklahoma Land Rush & Closure of the 'Indian Frontier'.

By the 1890s, a huge amount of land which had previously been part of the 'Indian Territories' had been claimed by the government in the American West. This 'Indian Territory' was meant to have been land that the US government set aside specifically for the indigenous peoples and formed what was known as the **Permanent Indian Frontier**. This idea of the Indian Frontier had been a US government policy as far back as 1834. At first, some settlers had tried to move onto this land but had been moved away by the US army to prove that they had kept the promise to protect Indian land. However, by 1893 this changed when the land in the new US state of **Oklahoma** became available to claim for the first time by the US government. The opening of this land signalled the end of the Indian Frontier.

Why was the Indian Territory of Oklahoma opened for settlement?

- In **1887**, a significant new law called the **Dawes Act** changed the life of the indigenous peoples forever. The Dawes Act stated that indigenous tribes no longer had **any rights** to their traditional land or **reservation** land.
- The US government no longer promised protected land in the Indian Territory which had been given to tribes like the Sioux, Apache, Comanche and the Cheyenne.
- Instead, individual indigenous families now received **160 acres** of poor homestead land for their family. Even worse, many indigenous families were then **cheated** into selling their land at a very cheap price by greedy white land speculators.
- As many indigenous families knew little about **farming** land they decided to **sell** their land. **This left vast amounts of land in the former Indian Territory of Oklahoma unoccupied and with no ownership.**

Demand for Land Results in the Land Rush

- By 1889, the US government under the leadership of **President Harrison** opened the middle of the former Indian Territory for settlement.
- The land was divided up into 160-acre sections with each section clearly marked out with a flag.
- Some hoped to claim the land attempted to enter the territory before the official start of the land rush but were turned back by the US army. These people were known as '**Sooners**'.
- Over **50,000** hopefuls set up camp on the boundary lines waiting for the land to become available.
- Using massive **publicity campaign**, President Harrison announced that at 12 noon on 22nd April, 1889, the areas would be opened up for claims.
- Thousands more rushed to the boundary of the land and waited. When the clock struck 12, canons '**boomed**' out signalling the start of the land rush. Everyone rushed over the boundary line with horses, wagons, on foot & bicycles.
- These people were therefore known as the '**Boomers**' or **'89ers'.** They travelled out to find the best land and claim it as theirs. This process was known as a **land rush**.
- There were seven major land rushed in Oklahoma starting in 1889 when 2 million acres of former Indian Territory was opened up.
- The largest land rush was on **16th September 1893** when over 100,000 people crowded to claim 8 million acres of land which had been opened up for settlement. The last land rush came in 1895 88,000 acres was claimed.

Importance of the Land Rush

It proved yet again that the Indian Territory was **never really protected by the US Government,** and the rights of the indigenous peoples were never respected. The US government repeatedly attempted to move indigenous tribes onto reservation lands with the further promise of protection.

The opening of Oklahoma for further settlement brought about the **closure of the ' Permanent Indian Frontier'** which had been promised to indigenous people back in 1833. No land was now protected for the indigenous peoples.

It proved that the government were willing to give into the continued high demand of the white settlers for more land in the West.

The land rush was a huge **publicity stunt** for the government which was deliberately used to attracted even more settlers to claim land in former Indian Territory land.

Dealing with Lawlessness: Significance of Billy the Kid, Wyatt Earp and the OK Corral (1881)

Background Information
The development of the American West continued to bring problems with law and order. By the 1870s and 1880s, lawlessness remained a problem due to the rising tensions between different settler groups.

POVERTY
Many settlers still struggled to make a living Stealing food and resources was hard to resist.

RESOURCES
Ranch owners, Indians and homesteaders still competed for the best land with access to water and grass.

FEAR
People were afraid to act against powerful gangs, corrupt police, powerful ranch owners & businessmen.

ATTITUDES
Men were expected to sort out their own problems and many had weapons such as guns. Killing by self-defense was the '**Code of the West**'.

VIGILANTES
Local vigilante groups would often deal with criminals quickly. Criminals would be lynched and beaten. The undermined official systems of law.

LAWMEN
There was a shortage of reliable men to become sheriffs. Many were ex-criminals themselves and chosen for their toughness.

GEOGRAPHY
The areas were that large that criminals knew they could get away with crimes and hide easily from the law men.

WEAK LAW SYSTEM
Lawmen were often corrupt and bribed by gangs. Judges and juries were easily influenced.

RACIST ATTITUDES
There was a greater mix of white Americans, Native Americans, Mexicans, Chinese and black Americans.

- However, by the 1880s, **lawlessness decreased**. Townspeople needed **peace** for their businesses to be successful.
- As forms of **transport** and **communication** developed, law offices and judges were able to keep in better contact with each other.
- Therefore, the violence of Billy the Kid and Wyatt Earp became the exception rather than the rule.

Billy the Kid

Billy grew up in the **gold mining camps** in New Mexico with no steady job. He stole food, became involved in **cattle rustling** and **horse stealing**. He became known for being able to **escape** from jails.

In **1878** Billy became involved in a conflict over resources between cattle baron **John Chisum** and another smaller, less powerful cattle rancher called Murphy who was desperate for more land. This was called the **Lincoln County War**. Billy fought against Chisum on the side of Murphy.

Despite the Lincoln Country War ending with the death of Murphy, Billy threatened to kill everyone who had been involved the death of his friend during the conflict. He formed his own **gang** and had many **hideouts** around New Mexico.

Local people appealed to the president to end all the violence linked with Billy the Kid. The president appointed a new governor and a new local sheriff called **Pat Garret** to bring Billy to justice.

In **1881**, Garratt captured Billy and brought him to court. He was sentenced to death but made a dramatic, murderous **escape** from jail. Garret tracked him down again and **shot** him dead.

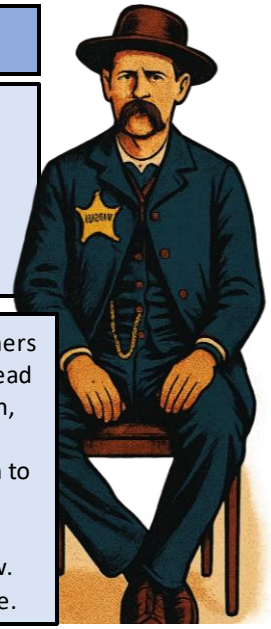
He was an exciting figure. Newspapers reported on him in a dramatic way and Pat Garret's book about him made some believe he was **a hero** of the West. Those with less power like homesteaders and smaller ranch owners liked the way he stood up for them. He proved that the system of law in Lincoln County was still too weak to deal with him and his gang. He proved that there was tension between the influential cattle barons and the weaker, small landowners.

Wyatt Earp and the OK Corral 1881

1874: After helping the local town Marshall to break up trouble between a rowdy group of cowboys, Wyatt Earp was offered a job as a **deputy Marshall** in a cow town called **Wichita** in Kansas.

1879: He then became a **Town Marshall** in **Dodge City**, Kansas before moving to Tombstone in Arizona.

1880: Tombstone was a rich town and controlled by mine owners and businessmen. Two rich ranching families hired Wyatt as their **Deputy Sheriff** to bring law and order in the town. They wanted to attract more investors into the town and so wanted it to be a peaceful place where business could take place.

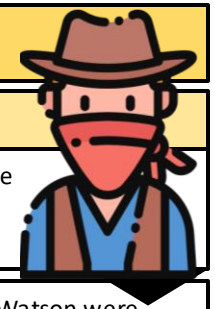


On 26th October, 1881, near Tombstone's OK Coral (corral is an enclosure for cattle/horses), Wyatt killed two local men from a big ranch businesses. They claimed that the ranch owners had opened fire first but many townspeople doubted this story.

1881: Wyatt's older brother Virgil was hired as a lawman & became the Town Marshall of Tombstone. He then hired Wyatt & Morgan Earp as his deputies. They had a lawless past with rumours that Wyatt has been involved in stagecoach robberies and cattle rusting. They developed a personal rivalry with rowdy and drunken cowboys who were known for violence.

1882: Trouble continued with ranchers shooting one of Wyatt's brothers dead and injuring the other. In retaliation, Wyatt shot the men who were responsible. Their violent approach to law keeping had resulted in more conflict. Wyatt was becoming a murderer with no regard for the law. Wyatt was forced to flee Tombstone.

The Range Wars & The Significance of the Johnson County War (1892)



Johnson County

Johnson County was in the state of Wyoming. Wyoming had originally been inside 'Indian Territory' but was soon settled by Americans once the Union Pacific Railroad ran through it.

The Cattle Barons

- ❑ By the 1870s, Johnson County was full of cattle ranchers. As ranching developed, rich and powerful cattle barons took hold of the area.
- ❑ With so much money the powerful ranchers set up an influential organisation called the **Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA).**
- ❑ Its members included high level politicians & state governors.
- ❑ It set out to control over the cattle industry and stop smaller ranchers.

Problems for the Cattle Barons

By the 1880s, they faced problems. After the bad '**Winter Die Up'** of 1886/7, the big ranch owners struggled with smaller ranches coping better. There were also more **homesteaders** and **small cattle ranchers** settling in Wyoming. This led to arguments over land as well as accusations about cattle rustling.

The complaints of the Cattle Barons

- ❑ The WSGA blamed any cattle rustling on homesteaders or smaller ranch owners. They also accused homesteaders of deliberately fencing off water supplies so cattle from the large ranches were unable to access water.
- ❑ The WSGA decided to take the law into their own hands. They hired a gunfighter called **Frank Canton** as a chief detective to catch rustlers.
- ❑ Some homesteaders were driven away or had their homes burned down.
- ❑ Tension grew as the cattle barons and homesteaders both needed to make a living from the plains.

The complaints of the homesteaders

- ❑ Homesteaders & small ranch owners resented how powerful the cattle barons had become and felt powerless when WSGA members had roles in the government and local law courts.
- ❑ Few cattle barons were punished for their behaviour towards homesteaders. Many decisions over land ownership went in the favour of the cattle barons who could afford the best lawyers.
- ❑ Smaller cattle ranchers were powerless when the cattlemen were able to take the law into their own hands and hire men to attack them.

….By 1892 these tensions ultimately led to a conflict known as the Johnson County War

1. Jim Averill ran a small store & saloon with his partner **Ella Watson**. However, they both lived on land owned by a local cattle baron named **Albert Bothwell**. Bothwell wanted them off the land. He then accused Ella Watson of being a prostitute and **steeling cattle** from his ranch. The rumour was that she had been given the cattle in return for her 'services' as a prostitute.

2. In response, Jim Averill wrote to a local **newspaper** accusing Bothwell of being a '**rich land grabber**'. As a result, Averill and Watson were **hanged** outside their cabin. The sheriff arrested men believed to be responsible but the case against them failed when witnesses were either killed or disappeared. Nobody was found guilty of the crime despite local people claiming they knew that the cattle barons we re behind it. There were further attacks on small ranch owners which left three more dead. However, Bothwell took over the land as well as Ella's cattle.

3. In response, homesteaders and small ranch owners set up their **own association** in 1892. They also decided to carry out the **round-up** of their cattle a month before the WSGA rounded up their cattle. This way, they could claim any of the spring's **unbranded new calves** for themselves. This was not illegal but clearly the cattle barons would be at a disadvantage and annoyed.

4. Angry, the cattle barons planned a full-scale **invasion** of Johnson County. This was with the full support of Wyoming's governor who even supplied them with a case of guns. The WSGA raised **$100,000** for the invasion and any legal costs. Some of this money was used to hire **22 gunmen** to kill the **70** homesteaders and small cattle ranch owners whose names had been written on a death list. These were the people who they believed were cattle rustlers. The gunmen were paid $5 per day and promised $50 for each rustler killed. They even paid the Union Pacific Railroad to bring the gunmen in for them on a specially ordered train. The gunfighters and cattlemen made up a force around 50 men.

5. Their plan was to capture the town of **Buffalo**, kill the **sheriff** and then kill the 70 people on the death list. They began by cutting down the **telegraph** wires which stopped the townspeople from contacting the outside world for help. However, things began to go wrong.

6. The gunmen stopped to attack a smaller ranch called the **KC Ranch**. There they were held up by **Nate Champion**. Single handed, and even after the death of his brother, he held off the invaders all day until they finally burnt him out of his cabin and shot. The next day, the people of Buffalo were armed and ready. 300 of them led by **Sheriff 'Red' Angus**, surrounded the WSGA men in a local ranch. The WSGA men were only saved when the US cavalry arrived, ordered there by the President himself. Their powerful friends had used their influenced again.

Consequences

- ❑ The WSGA gunmen were put on **trial.** However, they had backing from the **rich** cattle barons, local judges and **2 US senators**.
- ❑ The WSGA's lawyers argued that the trial could not have been fair if it was held in Johnson County and so the gunmen were moved – much to the anger of Sheriff Angus. Away from Johnson County, the people chosen to be on the jury were more likely to be on the side of the cattle barons.
- ❑ Also, knowing that Johnson County was short of money, the WSGA lawyers extended the trial as long as they could until Johnson County ran out of money.
- ❑ This meant that the trial was dropped and the WSGA men were freed.

Importance

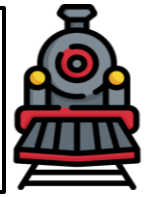
- ❑ The Johnson County War proved just how powerful the cattle barons remained in the West. They had the support from the US government as well as the US army in situations where they needed help. They were able to get away with serious crimes due to their influence in courts.
- ❑ It also proved still how dealing with tensions was still achieved through violence rather than using any official law enforcement methods.

Conflict on the Plains: The Battle of Little Bighorn (1876) & its impact on US Government Policy

By the 1870s, several agreements had been made between the American government and indigenous tribes. Many tribes agreed to move onto reservation land in return for promises of protection, money and the right to continue hunting buffalo. However, many government promises were broken – especially when gold was found on indigenous lands. For example, in 1859 gold was found in the Rocky Mountains. The **Cheyenne** refused to leave their spiritual land, and this resulted in the 1864 **Sand Creek Massacre**. In 1863, gold was discovered in Montana and prospectors used the **Bozeman Trial** through **Sioux** lands. This led to **Red Cloud's War** in 1866. These events led to a further increase in tensions. Today, we will examine how, in 1876, Sioux tribes united to defeat the US Army, led by US Army commander **George Custer** and his **7th Cavalry**. The defeat was a **shock** to the American people and their Government. It was a huge turning point in the treatment of indigenous peoples.

Key Events Leading to the Battle of Little Bighorn

Railroads



In 1874, the railroad came closer to traditional Sioux hunting grounds in Dakota. This land should have been protected by the **1868 Fort Laramie Treaty**. However, US Army commander, **George Custer** with his **7th Cavalry** were put in charge of protecting railroad builders from tribal attacks.

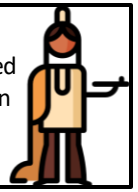
Custer's Gold Rush

However, Custer also used his time to **prospect** for gold in the **Black Hills** of Dakota. Within 6 months thousands of prospectors followed, claiming land to search for gold – breaking the terms of the **1868 Fort Laramie Treaty**.

The government negotiates

With the knowledge of gold in the Black Hills and demand from the prospectors for access to the land, the government tried to negotiate with the Sioux. They offered to buy the Black Hills for **$6 million** or pay the Sioux **$400,000 a year** to mine the land.

The Sioux Response



The Sioux **rejected** the offer and were angry that the government had not protected their land as promised in 1868. They continued raids and attacks on prospectors on the Black Hills. In addition, thousands of **Sioux** and **Cheyenne** warriors left their reservations to join with the Sioux leaders **Sitting Bull** & **Crazy Horse**.

US Government Demands

By December 1875, the government ordered the Sioux to return to their reservation within 60 days. **President Grant** stated that any Sioux outside the reservation would be attacked by the US army if they did not return.

Snow

However, **deep snow** made it impossible for all the Sioux to obey President Grant's order, even though they had tried. By the spring of 1876, **7,000 Sioux** had built up **1,000 lodges** on land outside their reservation. Chief Sitting Bull apparently said, 'If the whites want a war, we will give it to them'.

The Battle of Little Bighorn 1786

Little Bighorn Valley

The US planned to attack the Sioux and force them back to their reservation. Custer's **scouts** came across a camp of 2,000 warriors in the valley of **Little Bighorn**. Custer only had 600 cavalrymen and was ordered to wait for more soldiers to arrive before heading to Little Bighorn Valley to force them back.

Custer Attacks

However, Custer ignored the orders to wait for support and apparently said '*The largest Indian camp in North America is ahead and I am going to attack it*'. Custer went for a glorious victory over the Sioux. On 25th June, he recklessly led **200** of his men into the Little Bighorn Valley.

Sioux Attack

Custer and his men were spotted by Sioux Scouts who reported his presence to Chief Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull ordered the women and children of the tribe to safety. Meanwhile, Crazy Horse and 2,000 warriors led an attack on Custer & his men. Outnumbered, **Custer and all 200 cavalrymen were killed**.

Custer's defeat

Some of the warriors were better armed than the cavalrymen. They had been given 'repeating rifles' by local traders. The cavalrymen only had 'single-shot' rifles. It was clear that **Crazy Horse** had planned the attack carefully, something that was an entirely new tactic for the Indians. The Battle of Little Bighorn was a huge **failure** and **humiliation** for the US army.

Consequences of the Battle of Little Bighorn

Return to the Reservations

After the battle, the indigenous tribes were followed and attacked by the US army. By this point, there were too many soldiers for them to fight, and they were running low on ammunition and supplies. They gave in and rode back to their reservations under the control of the US Army.

Assimilate or Die

The government became **more aggressive towards** the indigenous peoples. Instead of trying to negotiate they now followed a policy called '**Assimilate or Die**'. They now aimed to wipe out the indigenous peoples altogether unless they changed their way of life and became 'American'.

A change in Public Attitude

News of the defeat reached the rest of America on **4th July** – the 100th anniversary of USA's independence. It was a huge shock to the American people who demanded revenge against the indigenous peoples. Public opinion about the indigenous peoples changed. Rather than being seen as 'weak savages' who needed to be treated like children, they were now seen as a real threat. There was huge pressure on the government to crush the indigenous peoples for good.

Further Settlement

The US government ordered the building of two more **army forts** near Sioux land with an extra 2,500 soldiers to protect the land. The Black Hills was now fully open for prospectors to use.

Starvation of the Sioux

The Sioux were moved onto an even **smaller reservation** where they were unable to farm. Many Sioux **starved** with no help from the Reservation Agency**.** The Sioux were forced to sell the **Black Hills**, give up their weapons and horses and **live under army rule**.

No more Indigenous Resistance

On May 4th, 1877, **Sitting Bull** escaped over the border to Canada. In May 1877 **Crazy Horse** rode into his reservation and surrendered. However, he was killed in the Autumn. The armed resistance of the Sioux was over.

Conflict on the Plains: The Wounded Knee Massacre (1890)

Background Information:
The Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876 was a significant victory for the Sioux against the US army. However, the humiliation and shock of the defeat resulted in the US government becoming even more aggressive towards the indigenous peoples. The government began to follow the policy of '**assimilate or die**' which threatened to end the existence of the indigenous peoples. The American public also demanded harsh action and revenge against those who had attacked Custer and his men at Little Bighorn. Consequently, the indigenous peoples in the reservations were becoming desperate. They were living on poor land with few farming skills, the government had cut their rations as a punishment for Little Bighorn, their movement was tightly restricted, and they had a hostile relationship with the reservation agents. This coupled with a drought in the summer of 1890 meant the Sioux were desperate for help from somewhere. For this help they looked to the **spirit world**.

The frozen body of Sioux Chief Big Foot taken two days after the Wounded Knee Massacre

Facing Starvation

The US Government cut Sioux **food rations,** partly as a continued punishment for their defeat of Custer at Little Bighorn. They received very little help during a **drought** which hit in 1890 wiping out the many of the crops they had grown on their reservation. **Chief Sitting Bull** had returned from Canada and was trying to encourage Sioux tribes to resist against the US government to help save his people.

The Ghost Dance

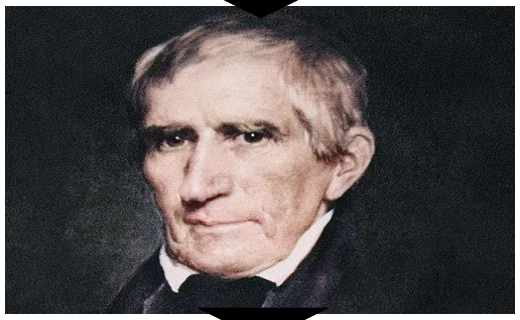
A Sioux named **Wovoka** claimed to have had a vision. His vision told him that if the tribes **rejected** the white way of life and danced a sacred dance, the **Great Spirit** would appear and bring all the dead indigenous peoples and the buffalo back to life. A great flood would then wash away the white people, and their spiritual lands would be returned to them once again. This dance became known as the **Ghost Dance**.

The Ghost Dance spread

- ❑ The belief in the Ghost Dance spread to other reservations, especially with the help and influence of **Sitting Bull**.
- ❑ More bands began to take part in the Ghost Dance on their reservations with the hope of restoring their traditional way of life.

Fear of the Ghost Dance

However, the reservation agents, US army troops and local governors were becoming very **unsettled** and worried about what the Sioux were doing with their dance. They were also concerned about the huge influence that **Sitting Bull** was having on the Sioux people.



President Harrison's Orders

President Harrison was informed of the dance and how it was creating a fearful atmosphere in the reservations. He ordered the US **7th Cavalry** (the same unit which had been defeated at Little Bighorn) army into the reservations to **force** an end to the Ghost Dance.

Sitting Bull's Death

The US government were convinced that Sitting Bull was encouraging the Ghost Dance and influencing his people into another rebellion. On **15th December**, 1890 a group of government officials burst into Sitting Bull's home and **shot** him dead.

Big Foot

Sitting Bull's followers fled south away from their reservation and joined with another Sioux band. This band was led by **Big Foot**. The bands gathered together in unity against Sitting Bull's death.

Wounded Knee Creek

- ❑ The US 7th Cavalry caught up with the tribes, gathered them together and took them to a place called **Wounded Knee Creek**.
- ❑ The plan was to stay at Wounded Knee Creek overnight due to the snow and then return to the reservation in the morning.

Wounded Knee Massacre

- ❑ It is believed that a Sioux warrior resisted being disarmed by a US cavalryman.
- ❑ This resistance led to the start of the Ghost Dance.
- ❑ In the confusion of the Ghost Dance, a gunshot was heard.
- ❑ The 7th Cavalry reacted. In only **10 minutes, 250** Sioux were dead**.**
- ❑ Half were **women** and **children**.
- ❑ This also included the death of **Big Foot**.

The Consequences

- ❑ The massacre was the last clash between the US army and the Sioux.
- ❑ The American public praised the US Army as they too, were worried about the Ghost Dance. It confirmed their view that the 'Indians' were 'hostile' and 'wild'. This also proved how little the Americans still understood about the traditions and beliefs of the indigenous peoples. It also proved that the US government were worried that the Ghost Dance would be successful and the tribes might one day rise up against them.
- ❑ Public opinion was positive as they believed the massacre was rightful revenge for the loss of Custer and his men at the Battle of Little Big Horn.
- ❑ Finally, by 1890, the US government announced that the Indian Frontier had ended. Nowhere within the USA now belonged to any other nation or people.

Destruction of Indigenous People's Way of Life: Life on the Reservations

Despite making several agreements that 'Indian Territory' would be protected, the US Government gave in to pressure and opened up even more land for settlement in the American West. The US government at first pressured and then forced indigenous peoples onto reservations. Reservation land was then restricted into smaller areas. As a result, the indigenous peoples lost their ability to live their traditional, nomadic and independent way of life. By the 1870s, many white Americans and the American government strongly felt that the only way of solving the '**Indian problem**' was to deliberately force indigenous peoples into smaller reservations to '**civilise**' or '**assimilate**' them into 'white' American culture.

The Impact of Life on Reservations

Tribal Chiefs & Councils Lost Power

- ❑ At first, food rations were given to the chiefs to hand out to families. This policy changed with families having to collect their own food. This weakened the power and authority of the chief.
- ❑ The government removed the legal right for the chiefs of a tribe to decide what happened to the tribe. This was because some tribal chiefs like Sitting Bull had begun to refuse any further treaties with the government.
- ❑ In the 1880s, the chief was no longer in charge of a reservation. Instead, the US government representatives only talked to other tribes' people who they could easily **bribe** or **threaten**.
- ❑ By **1885**, US law courts began to decide on decisions between the government and the indigenous peoples. From then, tribes had lost all ability to govern themselves or have any part in decision making. Therefore, the role of a tribe's council and chief had been completely removed.

Disease

The Indian people were very susceptible to the diseases of other settlers such as **measles, whooping cough** and the **flu**. With poor health, this caused further deaths on the reservations. Reservation agents would regularly withhold medical supplies and treatments.

De-skilled

Without their traditional lifestyle, they lost their hunting, riding and fighting skills. They found it hard to learn new skills such as farming as well as learn skills to gain other employment.

Assimilation & Schools

- ❑ Indigenous children were sent to **schools** that were away from the reservations. If their parents refused, their food and rations were cut until they agreed to allow their children there.
- ❑ Once in school, the children lived in **strict**, military style conditions and were educated in **Christianity**.
- ❑ They were punished for using their traditional language or keeping sacred items.
- ❑ By 1887, over 2,000 indigenous children were pupils across 117 boarding schools and 2,500 were in day schools.
- ❑ To assimilate them into 'white Americans' they were forced to cut their hair and wear American clothing.
- ❑ One boarding school leader said that his aim was to '**kill the Indian in him and save the man**'. However, indigenous children who had been educated as Americans still faced harsh **prejudice** from other Americans.

Indigenous Agents & Police

- ❑ The American government tactically began to appoint Reservation Agents who were from an indigenous **background** to look after food and equipment rations.
- ❑ The indigenous agents were well looked after, clothed & fed but in return they had to promise to keep their tribe in order. Some became **greedy** and **corrupt**, taking a bigger share for themselves.
- ❑ This way, the government were deliberately turning indigenous peoples against each other.

Social and Emotional Impact

- ❑ Indigenous peoples were dependent on the US government for food, clothing and supplies which were then limited over time.
- ❑ Tribes were introduced to alcohol for the first time. Unused to such a substance, many indigenous people became ill or began to rely on alcohol. Depression spread through the reservations.

Farming & Land

Indigenous peoples did not have the skills needed to farm. Reservations were often located on the land **least wanted** by the whites. This meant **poor soil** and a lack of **water**. Crops failed due to droughts, pests and animal diseases. Many died as a result.

Beliefs

Feasts, dances and ceremonies such as the Sun Dance were banned. The power of the medicine men was vanished. The US government aimed to replace this spiritual belief with **Christianity**.

Why did Tribes Agree to settle on Reservation Land?

- ❑ The government were **clever at persuading** the tribes by promising them what they wanted – especially food due to the decline in buffalo and that their reservation land would not reduce in size.
- ❑ Before the 1870s, tribal chiefs such as Sitting Bull **believed the promises** that they were given about their land being protected if they moved onto a reservation.
- ❑ Tribes did **not want to mix** or integrate into the lifestyle of the white settlers and so the best option for their survival was to move onto 'their own' segregated reservation where they believed they would be left alone and could continue with their traditional ways.
- ❑ The tribes were threatened with violence or reduced rations to get them to move onto smaller reservations.
- ❑ After 1885, the power of a tribes' **council** (the group who made decisions for the tribe) was lost completely as the tribes were told that they had to follow the laws of the US Government law courts. These courts forced Indians to give up their land.

Changing Government Attitudes Towards Indigenous Peoples: The Dawes Act 1887

The Dawes Act was a significant government policy which brought an end to indigenous peoples living in reservations. It ended the ability of indigenous peoples to live as a tribe and therefore took away their identity and traditional way of life. The **Dawes Act** was simply like a **Homestead Act** but for the indigenous peoples. Rather than being given reservation land for a whole tribe or band to live on, the Dawes Act now gave each individual indigenous **family** an allotted area of **160 acres** of land. The Dawes Act had many consequences. Significantly it was a deliberate government policy to destroy the traditions of the indigenous peoples by trying to 'assimilate' them into Christian, American society. Secondly, any reservation land not allocated under the Dawes Act was then free to be sold to other settlers – furthering the settlement of the American West.

US Government Policy c.1830-c.1890

- When the **Permanent Indian Frontier** was set up in 1834, the US government promised that no white settlement would take place west of the Mississippi River. However, as demand for land further west increased, these type of agreements were broken.
- The government then chose a policy of placing indigenous tribes into **reservations** to keep them away from white settlers. At first these reservations were protected by US law.
- By the **1880s** reservation land had been drastically reduced. The power of the tribal chiefs was taken away and the US government pushed for indigenous peoples to be **assimilated** into the American way of life and 'civilised' in a policy called **Assimilate or Die**.
- Finally, in 1890, the US government stated that the **Indian Frontier would cease to exist,** and no more land would be legally protected for the indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples had to make a choice of either assimilating into American life of suffering even more.

Aims of the Dawes Act

By owning individual land, it would remove the **identity** of the tribe and force independence.

It reduced the **influence** tribal chiefs over their tribe.

It would encourage families to **farm** for themselves rather than rely on the US government for supplies.

It would encourage and force indigenous peoples to '**assimilate**' into the American culture and lose their identity.

It would free up **even more land for the white settlers** who had pressured the government.

It would remove the government **cost** of running a reservation and allow the government to sell more land.

The Dawes Act 1887

- In this law, reservation land **stopped existing**.
- In return, each indigenous family was given full ownership of a **160-acre plot** of land on former reservation land. Single indigenous people were given 80 acres & orphans under 18 received 40.
- Those who took up the offer could then legally become **American citizens** as long as they did not sell their land for **25 years**.
- Significantly, the remaining reservation land could then be **sold off** to white settlers.
- This land was often bought by railroad companies and land speculators. Thus, further increasing the settlement of the American West.
- It sparked events like the **Oklahoma Land Rush**

Reasons for the Dawes Act 1887

- By the 1880s, it was believed that reservations were a problem. Many whites argued that there was no point offering reservation land to the indigenous people if they were unable to farm it properly.
- Others believed that as long as reservations existed, the indigenous peoples would continue to live as a tribe and not as 'white Americans'.
- Furthermore, despite the chiefs not having any real power in law, many indigenous peoples still looked up to their chiefs. The US government wanted a new policy which would take away the identity of the indigenous peoples for good and force them to live as white Americans.

The Impact of the Dawes Act

The indigenous peoples lost **half the reservation land** they had held before 1887.
Consequently, there was a huge amount land left over after each family had been given 160 acres which could be sold to other settlers or businesses.

Very few indigenous families who were given land could make a living as the land they were given was too poor to farm.
Many gave up and sold their land to white settlers. As a result, they ended up living in **extreme poverty**. Other indigenous families were **cheated** out of any good land they had by white settlers.

No land in the West was protected for the Plains Indians. It was all now opened up for settlement. There were now enough white settlers in the old reservation lands to **make new states** such as North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana & Wyoming.

The Dawes Act did not actually achieve its aim of making indigenous people independent homesteaders and American citizens. By 1890, most had given up and sold the land they had been given. Many refused to chose the option of assimilating into US society and many sunk into poverty and sickness. They became even more dependent on US government handouts.

Due to the removal of many reservations and the end of any 'Indian Territory' the US government established its first **national park** to protect America's wilderness areas – **Yosemite** in 1890. However, this was for the benefit of the white settlers in the West rather than the Indians.

The **Oklahoma Land Rushes** were a consequence of vast areas of land in former 'Indian Territory' now being freed up. Settlers from across the country took part in a race to secure new land.

President Arthur in 1881.
The allotment system will have a direct and powerful influence in dissolving the tribal structure, which has been so prominent a feature of savage life.

The Impact of the Hunting & Extermination of the Buffalo

Background Information

When settlers first began migrating to the American West in the 1840s, there was an estimated **35 million** buffalo on the Great Plains. Buffalo were the basis of the indigenous peoples' nomadic lifestyle and an essential part of their survival. Indigenous peoples respectfully used nearly every part of the buffalo and only killed the number they needed to survive. However, as settlement increased, the numbers of buffalo rapidly decreased. Some historians argue that this was a deliberate policy of the American government. Afterall, one way to reduce the number of indigenous peoples was to destroy the one animal they relied on the most. However, other historians believe that other factors played a part in the destruction of the buffalo such as the widespread fashion for hunting. It is estimated that by 1890, the number of buffalo had been reduced to less than **1,000** across the Great Plains.

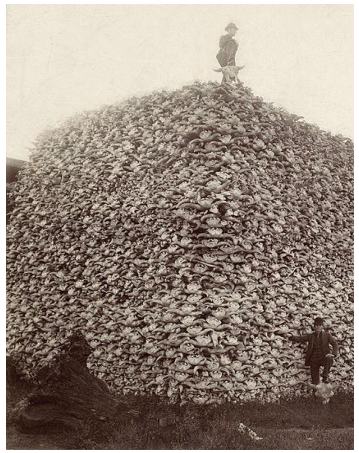
Factors which resulted in the extermination of the buffalo

America's Industrial Revolution

- By 1871, new machines could turn buffalo hide into **leather** for clothing. With a huge demand for leather in the cities, hunters rushed to kill as many as they could with each buffalo hide being sold for between $1 - $3. This encouraged huge numbers to hunt the buffalo.
- Factories also used the bones from the buffalo to ground them down into **fertilisers** or carbon which was used in sugar refining.
- **Bone pickers** would collect the bones, take them to the railroad and from here the bones would be transported to the factories in the east.

The Railroad

- As more railroads were built, there was an increasing demand for meat to feed workers.
- This increased when refrigerated railroad cars could transport more meat to further distances. The railroads were the only way the buffalo hides could be quickly transported to the factories in the cities and so this encouraged more hunting.

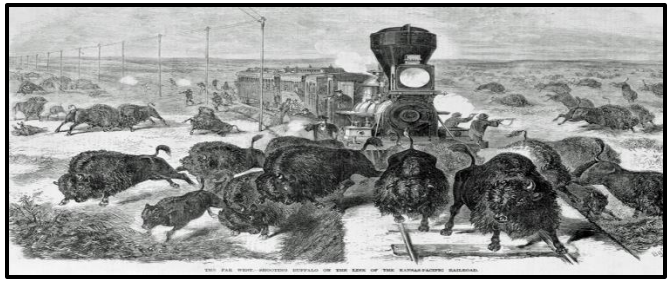


Improved Weapons

More powerful rifles were invented which was powerful enough to kill a buffalo in one shot. Many hunters killed more buffalo than they were able to skin and so wasted a lot of hides.

Buffalo Hides

- Hunters killed more buffalo than they needed and apart from the hide the rest of the animal was left to rot.
- Between 1872-74, **4.5 million** buffalo were killed just by buffalo hunters.



Buffalo Hunting

Railroad companies advertised buffalo hunting trips to the Great Plains. For them it was a **sport**. In 1880, an estimated 5,000 hunters were killing and skinning buffalo. By **1883**, the herds in the north had gone.

The Cattle Industry

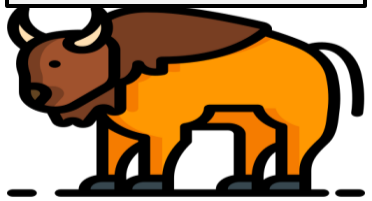
The grassland used by the buffalo was eaten by the huge numbers of cattle on the open plain ranches.

Development

Towns, farms, shops, railroads and trails all took up the land which the buffalo would have used for feeding and blocked the natural migration of the buffalo. The buffalo struggled to survive on the limited supply of fresh grass they needed to survive.

Drought & Disease

There had been repeated droughts in the 1840s as well as diseases which were spread by new cattle and horses brought to the Plains by ranchers & homesteaders.



The Impact on the Indigenous Peoples

- The loss of the buffalo destroyed the indigenous peoples' way of life. Some attempted to 'assimilate' by **cattle ranching** or **farming crops**. However, with little knowledge and experience, cattle herds could become infected by disease and crops failed year after year due to the poor-quality land the indigenous peoples had been given. Remember, farming land went against indigenous traditions.
- The government reduced the **food rations** given to the indigenous peoples. With no buffalo or food, this led to in **starvation** on the reservations as well as poor health and little resistance to new diseases like **flu** and **measles**. Many died as a result.
- With no buffalo, the indigenous peoples had **no choice** but to stay on the reservations.
- They lost their **independence** as they now depended on the US government for food, money and property. Without the buffalo, they also lost their **nomadic lifestyle** and had to live in 'fixed' **permanent properties** which were **fenced off**. Tribes traditionally believed that the land was owned by the Great Spirit and should never be 'property'.

The Impact for the US Government

- The US government aimed to 'assimilate' the indigenous peoples into an American way of life. Tribes resisted going into the reservations as long as there were buffalo to hunt.
- However, the extermination of the buffalo allowed the US government to keep the indigenous peoples in reservations and encouraged them to learn to farm. The government had agreed with the indigenous peoples that they would be allowed outside the reservations to hunt, if there were buffalo. Once the buffalo went, this right would disappear. Consequently, the US government controlled **their movement**.
- Without the buffalo, the indigenous peoples had to learn to farm This it gave the government a reason to eventually limit the food they offered in reservations.
- The government benefitted from the extermination of the buffalo at it allowed them to **build** even more in the West. For example, it was able to develop the railroads without the buffalo potentially causing harm to workers.
- The extermination of the buffalo allowed the further development of **cattle ranching**. Cattle ranchers had long called for the end of the buffalo who also ate the **grass** they wanted for their cattle. It proved again how powerful the **cattle barons** were within the government.