

Miners, Ranchers, and Cowhands

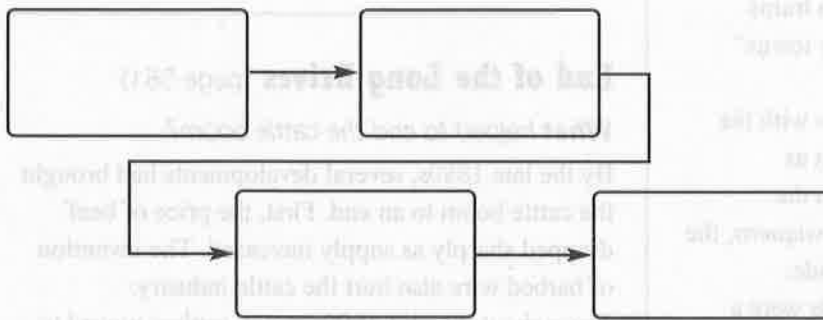
Before You Read

In the last chapter, you read about how the nation attempted to rebuild itself after the Civil War

In this section, you will learn how economic opportunity spurred Americans to begin moving to the West after 1860.

As You Read

Use this diagram to take notes on the rise and fall of the cattle industry.



Geography and Population of the West (pages 557–558)

Where was the Great Plains?

The region beyond the nation’s towns and cities was known as the **frontier**. Spreading out across the frontier was the **Great Plains**. This was the area from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains. The Great Plains had few trees. But its grasslands were home to about 300,000 Native Americans in the mid-1800s. They followed the buffalo that *roamed* the region.

Gradually, white people began to settle on the frontier. The railroads played a key role. Trains carried natural resources from the West to eastern markets. Trains also brought miners, farmers, and ranchers west to develop the land. White settlement of the frontier would bring an end to the way of life for Native Americans in the West.

1. How did railroads help to open the West?

TERMS & NAMES

frontier The sparsely settled area in the West

Great Plains Area from Missouri River to Rocky Mountains

boomtown Town that experiences economic or population boom

long drive Cattle drive to cow towns

vaquero One of the early cowhands who came to the Southwest from Mexico

vigilante A citizen who took the law into his or her own hands

Mining in the West (pages 558–559)

What brought miners to the West?

In 1859, gold and silver discoveries brought many settlers to Colorado and Nevada. For example, *prospectors* found riches at the Comstock Lode in western Nevada. (A lode is a deposit of a valuable mineral buried in layers of rock.) Settlements near the more prosperous mines turned into **boomtowns**. These were towns that had great economic or population growth in a short time. Miners from around the world traveled to the West in search of riches.

Early miners used panning and sluicing. In these techniques, prospectors washed away sand and gravel taken from a stream to separate out any bits of *precious* metal. Later, larger companies moved in and began digging underground.

By the 1890s, the mining boom was over. Many mines closed because the costs of operating them had become too high. In the end, few miners became rich.

2. Why did many mines eventually close?

The Rise of the Cattle Industry; Vaqueros and Cowhands (pages 559–560)

What helped the cattle industry to grow?

Until the Civil War, cattle herds on the frontier were small. There were few buyers for western beef. Also, ranchers had no way to get their beef to markets in the East. The railroads changed that. With the coming of railroads to the West, ranchers could ship their cattle in rail cars to meat-hungry eastern cities. Soon cattle ranching became a *profitable* business.

Ranchers hired cowboys, or cowhands on horseback, to drive cattle to towns along the rail lines. From there, the cattle would be loaded on trains headed east. The cattle drives to the “cow towns” were known as **long drives**.

The first cowhands came from Mexico with the Spaniards in the 1500s. They were known as **vaqueros**. They helped Spanish settlers in the Southwest manage their herds. From the *vaquero*, the American cowhand learned to rope and ride.

Among the cowhands of the mid-1800s were a large number of former Confederate and Union soldiers. About one in three cowhands were either Mexican or African American.

3. What groups worked as cowhands during the mid-1800s?

The “Wild West” (pages 560–561)

Who were vigilantes?

At first, railroad towns in the West had no local governments. There were no law officers to keep order. To protect themselves, citizens formed

vigilante groups. **Vigilantes** were people willing to take the law into their own hands. Often, vigilante justice consisted of hanging suspects or shooting them on the spot.

As towns became more settled, citizens elected a local sheriff. The local law officer would arrest outlaws and hold them in jail until a trial was held.

4. What did vigilante justice often consist of?

End of the Long Drives (page 561)

What helped to end the cattle boom?

By the late 1880s, several developments had brought the cattle boom to an end. First, the price of beef dropped sharply as supply increased. The invention of barbed wire also hurt the cattle industry.

Throughout the mid-1800s, many settlers moved to the Plains to farm or raise sheep. They fenced in their lands with barbed wire. As a result, the open range disappeared. Cattle could no longer pass freely over trails.

The harsh winter of 1886–1887 also dealt a blow to the cattle industry. During the bitter cold, thousands of cattle froze to death. Many ranchers were put out of business.

5. What factors led to the end of the cattle boom?

Native Americans Fight to Survive

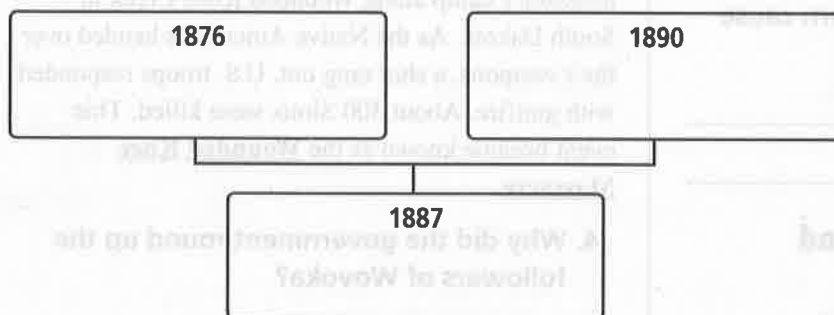
Before You Read

In the last section, you read about how Americans began to settle the West in the years following the Civil War.

In this section, you will learn how Native Americans of the Great Plains fought to protect their way of life.

As You Read

Use this diagram to take notes on the significant events in the clash between Native Americans and white settlers.



Native American Life on the Plains; A Clash of Cultures (pages 562–564)

How did the Plains tribes live?

Before 1500, most Plains tribes lived in villages along rivers and streams. They hunted various animals. But the buffalo was the most important. Buffalo meat was the chief food in their diet. The tribes also used nearly every part of the buffalo for food, clothing, or shelter.

In the early 1540s, the Spanish first brought horses to the Great Plains. The arrival of horses changed the way of life of the Plains people. They quickly became expert riders. They hunted the buffalo across the region. Over time, many Plains tribes developed a *nomadic* way of life tied to buffalo hunting.

Eastern Native Americans tribes also were living on the Plains by the mid 1800s. Decades before, the federal government had forced them to move west onto reservations. A **reservation** is land set aside for Native American tribes.

As more settlers moved west, the demand for land grew. So the federal government tried to buy back some of the reservation land. Many Native

TERMS & NAMES

reservation Land set aside for Native American tribes

Sand Creek Massacre A deadly attack on a peaceful Cheyenne village by Colorado militia

Sitting Bull Sioux chief

George A. Custer U.S. cavalry commander

Battle of the Little Big Horn Famous battle between U.S. troops and Native Americans

Wounded Knee Massacre Mass killing of Native Americans by U.S. troops

Dawes Act Plan that gave Native Americans land to farm

Americans agreed because they saw no other choice. But some tribes refused to give up any more of their land. The result was more fighting between whites and Native Americans.

In 1862, about 1,200 Colorado militia attacked a peaceful Cheyenne village. More than 150 Cheyennes were killed in what was called the **Sand Creek Massacre**.

1. What was the result of the refusal of some Native Americans to hand over more land to the federal government?

Battle of the Little Bighorn

(pages 564–565)

Who won the Battle of the Little Bighorn?

Fighting was especially fierce between white settlers and the Sioux. In 1874, white prospectors rushed onto Sioux land after discovering gold there. Sioux warriors united under two chiefs, **Sitting Bull** and

Crazy Horse. Their goal was to drive out the settlers.

The Seventh Cavalry set out to return the Sioux to the reservation. The commander of the cavalry was Lieutenant Colonel **George A. Custer**. In June of 1876, the two sides clashed near the Little Bighorn River in Montana. Custer and his men—211 in all—were wiped out by several thousand Sioux and Cheyennes in the **Battle of the Little Big Horn**.

News of Custer's defeat shocked the nation. The government stepped up its military effort. The result was that the Little Bighorn was the last major Native American victory.

2. What did defeat at Little Bighorn cause the government to do?

Resistance in the Northwest and Southwest (pages 565–566)

Which tribes resisted white settlement?

The Sioux was not the only tribe to battle white settlers. The Nez Perce also sought to keep their land. The Nez Perce lived throughout eastern Oregon and Idaho. During the 1860s, whites began moving onto their land. Most members of the tribe were forced to sell their land and to move. But in 1877 a group led by Chief Joseph refused. The army eventually forced the group to surrender.

In the Southwest, both the Navajos and Apaches fought against being moved to reservations. These tribes battled the U.S. army before finally surrendering.

3. Why did some tribes fight against white settlers?

A Way of Life Ends (page 566)

What was the Wounded Knee Massacre?

By the late 1800s, the way of life of the Native

Americans on the Great Plains had come to an end. The buffalo herds that they depended upon for their survival had nearly disappeared. Millions had been killed by white hunters.

By the 1880s, most Plains tribes had been forced onto reservations. Some turned to a Native American prophet named Wovoka. He predicted a time when Native Americans would again roam free. Wovoka's followers grew, especially among the Sioux. The government feared that the Ghost Dancers, as they were called, were preparing for war.

In December 1890, the army rounded up a large group of Ghost Dancers. Officials placed them in a temporary camp along Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota. As the Native Americans handed over their weapons, a shot rang out. U.S. troops responded with gunfire. About 300 Sioux were killed. This event became known as the **Wounded Knee Massacre**.

4. Why did the government round up the followers of Wovoka?

The Dawes Act Fails (page 567)

What was the goal of the Dawes Act?

Some Americans felt that the only way Native Americans could survive was through assimilation. This meant adopting the culture of the people around them. These reformers wanted to “Americanize” Native Americans—to make them more like whites.

The government tried this approach by passing the **Dawes Act** in 1887. This act encouraged Native Americans to settle down as farmers. It divided reservations into individual plots of land for each family. But few Native Americans wanted to be farmers. In the end, the Dawes Act was a failure.

5. Why did the Dawes Act fail?

Chapter **19** Section 3 (pages 568–571)

Life in the West

Before You Read

In the last section, you read how Native Americans fought to keep their land and their way of life.

In this section, you will learn how different groups of settlers helped to shape the West.

As You Read

Use this diagram to take notes on the how these different groups helped to settle the West.

TERMS & NAMES

homestead A piece of land and the house on it

Mexicano Spanish-speaking southwesterner

William “Buffalo Bill” Cody Buffalo hunter who promoted life in the West

buffalo soldier Name given to an African American serving in the U.S. army in the West

Group	Contribution
Women	
Mexicans	
African Americans	
Chinese	

Women in the West (pages 568–569)

What was life like for women in the West?

Western life provided new opportunities for women. They did much work on the **homestead**, a piece of land and the house on it. They also worked as teachers or domestics servants. Some became sheriffs, gamblers, and even outlaws.

Women on the frontier had greater legal rights than women had in the East. In most territories, women could own property and control their own money. In 1869, Wyoming Territory led the nation in giving women the vote. When Wyoming sought statehood in 1890, many in Congress demanded that it *repeal* its woman suffrage law. But Wyoming refused.

1. What rights did women in the West enjoy?

The Rise of Western Cities (pages 569–570)

How did cities in the West grow?

Cities grew quickly in the West. Gold and silver strikes turned sleepy towns into booming cities. San Francisco in California grew from a small town to a city of about 25,000 in just one year after the 1849 gold rush. Denver was not even a town in 1857. But by 1867, it was the capital of Colorado Territory.

Railroads also brought rapid growth to towns in the West. Omaha, Nebraska, *flourished* as a meat-processing center for cattle ranches in the area. Portland, Oregon, became a regional market for fish, grain, and lumber.

2. What factors led to the growth of cities in the West?

Mexicanos in the Southwest (page 570)

Who were the Mexicanos?

For centuries, the Southwest had been home to people of Spanish descent whose ancestors came from Mexico. These people called themselves **Mexicanos**.

In the 1840s, the annexation of Texas and Mexico's defeat in the Mexican War brought much of the Southwest under the control of the United States. Soon English-speaking white settlers began arriving. The Mexicanos called them Anglos. These pioneers came to the Southwest because of opportunities in ranching, farming, and mining.

The number of American settlers in the Southwest continued to grow. The result was that the Mexicanos lost economic and political power. Many also lost their land.

3. What effect did the American settlement in the Southwest have on Mexicanos?

The Myth of the Old West (pages 570–571)

How did Americans view the West?

America developed a love affair with the West. Many Americans saw the West as a larger-than-life place where brave men and women lived.

Writers and artists promoted the romantic *myth* of the West. Novels portrayed white pioneers as heroes. Native Americans often appeared as villains. African Americans were not even mentioned.

William “Buffalo Bill” Cody also helped to promote the myth of the West. Cody was a buffalo hunter turned businessman. He put on a Wild West

show that highlighted aspects of western life. His show performed across the country and in Europe.

4. What groups promoted the myth of the West?

The Real West (page 571)

What groups helped to settle the West?

The myth of the Old West overlooked the contributions of many peoples. The first cowhands were Mexican *vaqueros*. They taught ranching skills to the American newcomers. Native Americans and African Americans played a role in cattle ranching, too.

Many African Americans served in the U.S. army in the West. They were known as “**buffalo soldiers.**” Also, the western railroads would not have been built without the labor of Chinese immigrants.

Some argue that the image of the *self-reliant* westerner is not quite *accurate*. Settlers relied greatly on the help of others, including the government. The U.S. army aided settlers by removing Native Americans to reservations. The government also helped to finance the building of railroads and gave away the free land that brought settlers to the West.

5. List the groups that played a role in settling the West.

Chapter **19** Section 4 (pages 574–579)

Farming and Populism

Before You Read

In the last section, you read about the different groups that helped to settle the West.

In this section, you will read about the farmers who moved to the Plains and the economic problems that they faced.

As You Read

Use this chart to take notes on the problems of farmers and their solutions.

Problem	Solution
treeless plains	
tough soil	
high freight rates	
no political power	

TERMS & NAMES

Homestead Act Law that offered land to anyone who agreed to settle it

Exoduster An African American who migrated to the West

sodbuster A farmer on the Great Plains

Grange Group that helped farmers

cooperative Farm organization owned and run by its members

Populist Party National political party formed by farm groups

gold standard System in which government backed every dollar with a certain amount of gold

William Jennings Bryan Presidential candidate supported by Populists and Democrats

U.S. Government Encourages Settlement (pages 574–575)

What was the Homestead Act?

The government wanted people to settle in the West after the Civil War. The government had passed the **Homestead Act** in 1862. This law offered 160 acres of land free to anyone who would live on the land and work it for five years.

In response to the act, many people headed west in search of a new life. Thousands of African Americans left the South. Many sought escape from continuing discrimination. A large group that migrated to Kansas compared themselves to the Biblical Hebrews leaving slavery in Egypt. They called themselves **Exodusters**. Hundreds of thousands of European immigrants also settled in the West.

1. Name two groups that settled in the West in large numbers.

Life on the Farming Frontier (pages 575–576)

What challenges did Plains farmers face?

Life on the frontier was a challenge. The Plains were nearly treeless. Farmers were called **sodbusters**. They built their first homes with blocks of sod. This is the thick top layer of soil. Farmers had to burn corn cobs and dried manure for fuel. They often had to dig deep into the ground for water. Settlers also had to face blizzards, tornadoes, and drought.

New inventions helped farmers to meet some of their challenges. The steel plow let farmers slice through tough soil. Improved windmills pumped water from deep wells to the surface. Barbed wire allowed farmers to fence in livestock. Other machines made harvesting more *efficient* and less work.

2. Which inventions aided farmers on the Plains?

The Problems of Farmers (pages 576–577)

What was the Grange?

Improved machinery helped farmers to grow more food. Such a large supply of crops caused prices to drop. So farmers received less money for their goods. At the same time, running a farm became more expensive. One reason was the railroad companies. They charged farmers high fees to carry their crops to market.

These high costs made farmers angry. They reacted by joining together to seek changes. In 1867, farmers formed the **Grange**. It began as a social organization. But soon its members began working to improve the economic conditions of farmers. Grange members formed **cooperatives**. These are businesses owned and operated by their members.

Farmers also demanded help from the government. For example, Grangers asked states to *regulate* railroad rates. In 1877, the Supreme Court backed the farmers in their fight against the railroads. The Court ruled that government could regulate businesses like the railroads that serve the public interest.

3. Why were farmers seeking action against the railroads?

The Rise of Populism; The Election of 1896 (pages 577–578)

What did the Populist Party advocate?

In 1890, several farm groups formed the **Populist Party**, or People's Party. The Populist Party wanted the government to adopt a free silver policy. This meant the unlimited coining of silver. Since silver was plentiful, more money would be put in circulation. Farmers hoped that increasing the money supply would cause inflation. This would result in higher prices for all goods—including crops.

Opponents of free silver wanted to keep the **gold standard**. Under this system, the government backs every dollar with an amount of gold. Since the nation's gold supply was limited, fewer dollars would be in circulation. Prices would not rise. And inflation would be less likely.

The Populist Party also called for government ownership of railroads and shorter working hours. The Populist candidate lost the 1892 presidential election. But the party won more than a million votes.

In 1896, the Populist Party candidate was **William Jennings Bryan**. Most farmers voted for Bryan. But the Republican candidate, William McKinley, won the election. He was backed by industrialists and other business leaders in the East. The election was the beginning of the end for the Populist Party.

4. Why did farmers support a free silver policy?

The Closing of the Frontier

(pages 578–579)

What was the Oklahoma land rush?

By the 1880s, fenced-in fields had replaced open plains. The last major piece of open land was settled during the Oklahoma land rush in 1889. With the blast of a starting gun, thousands of whites settlers rushed to claim 2 million acres of land that had once belonged to Native Americans.

In 1890, the Census Bureau declared that the country no longer had a continuous frontier line. The frontier no longer existed.

5. When did the frontier officially disappear?

Glossary/After You Read**roam** To travel without a purpose, wander**prospector** One who explores an area for natural deposits**precious** Of high cost or worth**profitable** Something resulting in a beneficial gain or return**nomadic** Leading a life of wandering and roaming**temporary** Not permanent**repeal** To revoke or take back**flourish** To grow and thrive**myth** A fiction or a half-truth**self reliant** To count on one's own abilities and resources**accurate** Containing no errors, correct**efficient** Acting or producing effectively with little waste**regulate** To control or direct**Terms & Names****A.** Write the letter of the name or term next to the description that fits it best.

- a. boomtown d. Grange
 b. George A. Custer e. William Jennings Bryan
 c. Dawes Act

- _____ 1. Populist Party presidential candidate
 _____ 2. Towns that experienced quick growth as a result of gold and silver strikes
 _____ 3. Act that attempted to assimilate Native Americans into white culture
 _____ 4. Cavalry commander who was routed by Native Americans at Little Bighorn
 _____ 5. Group that pushed for better economic conditions for farmers

B. Circle the name or term that best completes each sentence.

1. _____ were people willing to take the law into their own hands.

Buffalo soldiers Vigilantes Exodusters

2. Many Native Americans refused to live on _____.

reservations homesteads railroad property

3. Through his Wild West shows, _____ promoted the myth of the Old West.

George Custer William "Buffalo Bill" Cody William Jennings Bryan

4. African Americans who migrated to the West called themselves _____.

Exodusters cow hands buffalo soldiers

5. Those who wanted to see inflation remain low backed a _____.

gold standard free silver policy cooperative

Main Ideas

1. How did the railroads spur western settlement?

2. Why was the Battle of Little Bighorn the last major Native American military victory?

3. How were women's contributions to the West recognized by western lawmakers?

4. How did the arrival of English-speaking white settlers change life for the Mexicanos in the Southwest?

5. What were the goals of the Populist Party?

Thinking Critically

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Do you think that trying to assimilate Native Americans into white society was a good idea? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think the myth of the West had such a powerful hold on Americans?