

The American West; 1835-95

Key Topic 3: Conflict and conquest, c1876-1895



Background Information

1876 saw a disastrous defeat for the US Army by the Plains Indians, which radically changed government attitudes. By 1877, Sioux resistance was all but over, but army harassment of Plains Indians continued until the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890.

Farming on the Plains had made great progress due to technological developments and improvements in farming methods. This gave a big 'push' to settlement, which put more pressure on the government to release more reservation land for white Americans to homestead. The cattle industry enjoyed its 'beef bonanza' during the 1870s and early 1880s, with huge profits being made by the cattle barons of the open range.

The good years on the Plains came to a devastating end in the winter of 1886-87, however, revealing that open ranching was unsustainable. This meant changes for the lives of cowboys, and intensified conflicts between big ranchers and homesteaders. This caused more problems for law and order, as the range wars over land-use dragged in gunslingers like Billy the Kid and Wyatt Earp.

For the Plains Indians, 1876 marked the end of government toleration of separate American Indian nations within the USA. Reservations were cut down to scraps of territory and several methods were used to destroy Plains Indian identities, so Plains Indians would stop resisting the spread of 'civilisation' and surrender to the American way of life.

In this module you will revise:

Changes in farming, the cattle industry and settlement (The impact of new technology and farming methods, changes in farming including; the winter of 1886-87 and the end of the open range, Continued growth of settlement; the Ex-oduster movement and Kansas (1879), the Oklahoma Land Rush of 1893)

Conflict and tension (How effective were the solutions to problems of law and order; Sheriffs and marshals, Significance of Billy the Kid, OK Corral (1881), Wyatt Earp, the Johnson County War of 1892, conflicts at; The Battle of Little Big Horn (1876) and Wounded Knee Massacre (1890))

The Plains Indians; the destruction of their way of life (The hunting and extermination of the buffalo, reservations, changing government attitudes towards the Natives, including the Dawes Act (1887) and the closure of the Indian Frontier)

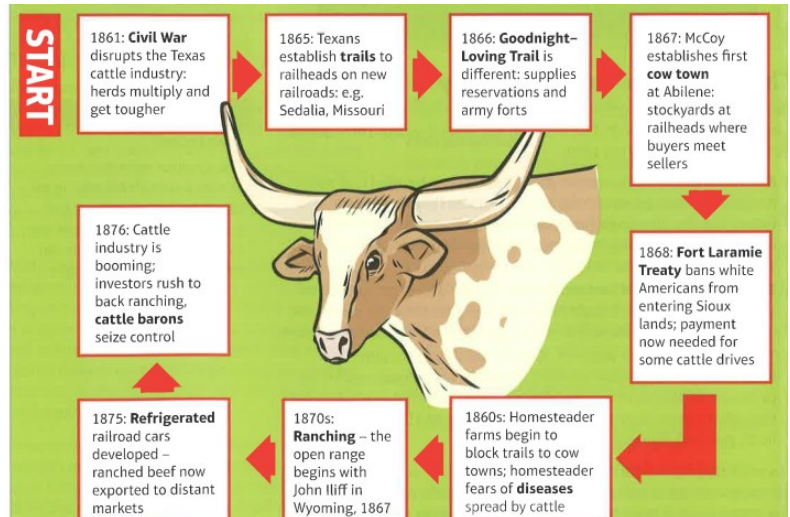
K.T 3.1 Changes in farming, the cattle industry and settlement

Changes to the cattle industry

Through the **1870s** so much money went into the cattle industry that open ranges became overpopulated. This resulted in cattle becoming weak as a result of hunger because there was not enough grass to feed all the cattle. This problem was made worse by:

- **Fall in demand:** beef was so plentiful that shops lowered their prices which meant the price paid for cattle fell.
- **Conditions of ranches:** overpopulated ranches put huge pressure on the land and the grass never had time to grow leaving the land dry and withered.
- **'Great Die Up':** the winter of **1886-87** was very harsh and temperatures dropped below **-55°C**. weakened cattle did not survive and around **15%** of open range herds died. This left cattlemen bankrupt and any cattle that survived were in very poor condition.

The combination of these factors put an end to ranching on the open range. Smaller ranches typically survived the harsh conditions of **1886-87**, therefore after **1887** smaller closed off ranches became the model of the cattle industry. These ranches used barbed wire as fencing to keep their cattle safe



Benefits of smaller closed ranches

- ◆ Smaller herds were easier to guard, so cattle rustling became less of a problem.
- ◆ Because there were fewer cattle, ranchers had more time and money to providing care for their herds, this resulted in a better quality of meat that could be sold at a higher price.
- ◆ Barbed wire ensure ranches could control breeding on ranches easier, which helped to prevent overpopulation. It also ensured that cows were breeding with pure-blooded breeds which ensures a better quality of meat.
- ◆ In times of drought it was easier to provide water to smaller herds using the wind pumps.
- ◆ Smaller herds were easier to shelter when the snow



Figure 3.3 Changes in cowboy work from the Civil War to after the winter of 1886-87.

The impact of the end of the open range

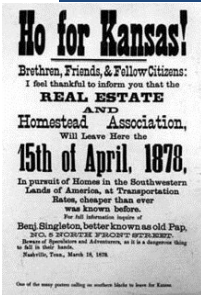
The disastrous winter of 1886-87 was called the **'Great Die Up'** because huge amounts of cattle died on open ranges. The end of the open range meant that there was less of a demand for cowboys, any who did stay in the industry worked as ranch workers. On ranches cowboys **branded and de-horned cattle, looked after horses, mended barbed wire fences, inspected grass and harvest the hay to feed the cattle in winter**. The living conditions of a cowboys also changed; on ranches cowboys lived in bunkhouses that were often in very poor conditions. Cowboys were subject to strict schedules and rules while living on the ranches. The most time consuming job for cowboys was 'riding the line' were they had to patrol the boundaries of the ranches and keep an eye out for any stray cattle. Different ranches worked together at the

K.T 3.1 Changes in farming, the cattle industry and settlement

The continued growth of settlement

1872-1895

The ideas behind **Manifest Destiny** were deeply racist and allowed Americans to treat Plains Indians as inferior. It also allowed whiter Americans to justify their actions when it came to removing the Plains Indians so they could settle. For settlers the process of settlement was natural and they believed their actions were justified aiding the development of America.



The Oklahoma Land Rush (1893)

Indian Territory was land given to Plains Indians by the US government for any Indians who lived **east of the Mississippi River** and had been forcibly removed by the **Indian Removal Act**. However there was a section within the middle of the Territory that had not been given to any tribe, therefore white settlers tried to move onto this land. The US Army continually moved them off again as Indian Territory was not open to white settlement. **The Dawes Act** (see K.T 3.3) meant that Indians began to move off the Territories and started to own 160-acres of land. All land that no longer used as reservation or Indians Territories were sold, and often Indians sold their land to white settlers as they did not wish to be farmers.

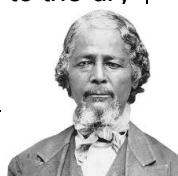
In 1889 the US government opened up the middle sections of the Indian Territory for white settlement, the land was divided up into 160-acre plots and on 22 April 1889 the area was open for claims. This process was called a **land rush**; there were **seven** land rushes in Oklahoma between **1889-1895**. the largest was **in 1893 when 8 millions** acres were open for claims.

Although the Us government claimed they would protect Indian Territory the pressure from white settlers was too great. The Oklahoma Land Rush highlights the lack of control Plains Indians had over the

The Exoduster movement (1879)

The **Civil War** between northern anti-slavery states and the southern slave states was won by the North in 1865, as a result **four million slaves were freed** across the USA. However many white people in the south did not accept black Americans as free and did everything they could to keep black Americans from having equal rights.

The **Homestead Act** gave the freed black slaves an opportunity to start a new life. **Benjamin Singleton**, a former slave, promoted the settlement to Kansas, having settled there himself in 1873. He promoted Kansas as a safe area for black Americans and through propaganda in newspapers and speeches created the large migration of black settlers. By the end of 1879, 40,000 freed slaves had migrated west to Kansas, Missouri, Indiana and Illinois. The black settlers were known as the **Exoduster**: an Exodus (deperated of a group to a new life) to the dusty West.



While Singleton likes to take credit for the mass migration to Kansas, other reasons were also important.

- **Henry Adams** also promoted the idea of black migration away from the South
- The **Homestead Act** offered the promise of free land and was a significant pull factor was migrants.
- During the Civil War blacks started to move around the south and away from the south in the search for a new life
- Kansas had a reputation as an anti-slave state and in **1861** had become a '**free state**' (a state were slavery was abolished). As a result black Americans believed Kansas would welcome black people and they would be safe.
- The **Biblical story of Exodus** also provided a religious factor, many trusted that God would provide for them and help them escape oppression to find a better

K.T 3.1 Changes in farming, the cattle industry and settlement

Significance of the Exoduster movement

1. The movement helped the development of the west, by 1880 there were 43,107 black Americans in Kansas
2. Many Exodusters had travelled through different areas and contracted yellow fever so many were dangerously ill.
3. The governor of Kansas set up aid to help migrants which helped Kansas to develop into organised colonies which were temporarily state funded.
4. Southerners were outraged that the government was helping black Americans settled. Many whites in Kansas were also unhappy with the amounts of funding that was given to black settlers when they themselves had received very little help.
5. The reality of the movement was not as most blacks had hoped. The land was difficult to farm and most did not have the money to support themselves in the West. Exodusters typically remained much poorer than white settlers in Kansas. By the late 1880s there was a second wave of migration as

Changes and development to farming

Over the previous two modules you have revised the problems settlers faced on the plains and some solutions to these issues. The table below highlights how some of the key techniques in farming improved after the 1870s and how they made farming even more successful on the Plains

<i>Change/development</i>	<i>Information/ developments</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Dry farming	Developed by Henry Webster Campbell in 1879, dry farming was a technique used to trap rainwater under the surface allowing the soil on the Plains to be prepared for harvest.	This method promoted strong root growth of crops as crops could access water in the soil. This method helped overcome the problem farmers faced due to the dryness of the Plains. This method was used into the 20th century.
Wind pumps	In 1856 Daniel Halladay developed a wind pump using a windmill. However where water was deeper than 400 meters the wooden windmills were not strong enough to collect the water. In the 1880s the wind pump had been developed using metal . They continued to grow in size which made collecting water easier.	The wind pumps allowed settlers access to water. The developments made water even more accessible meaning more people settled. By using metal and building bigger blades water was collected quickly and easily making problems of farming manageable .
Barbed wire	Invented in 1874 by Joseph Glidden , barbed wire allowed farmers to fence off their land to protect their crops. It was developed later in the 1880s to have a coating to prevent the wire from rusting .	Barbed wire allowed farmers and homesteaders to protect their crops from being trampled by cattle. Later after the County Wars ranchers used barbed wire to fence off their ranches which helped ease tension .
Mechanisation	Investors and manufacturers made good money solving farmers' problems and they made farming easier. Dry farming required the earth to be ploughed very deeply, while the silky plough did this job something it could not go deep enough. In the 1880s improved steel ploughs and seed drills were invented allowing farmer access to deeper soil and the drills planted the seeds.	Mechanisation made farming faster and more productive . It allowed farmers to farm large areas easily meaning homesteaders often expanded their lands. Mechanisation also strengthened the connection between industry and agriculture which in turn boosted the US economy .

K.T 3.2: Conflict and tension

Continued problems of law and order

Timeline	
Conflict and tension	
<p>1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn</p>	<p>1877 Crazy Horse surrenders to the US Army</p>
<p>1878 Billy the Kid involved in the Lincoln County War, New Mexico</p>	<p>Billy the Kid shoots Frank Cahill in self-defence: his first killing (of 21)</p> <p>Crazy Horse killed as he resists arrest</p>
<p>1881 Billy the Kid shot and killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett</p> <p>Sitting Bull and his followers surrender to the US Army</p> <p>Gunfight at the OK Corral, Tombstone, Arizona</p>	<p>1882 Morgan Earp shot and killed</p>
<p>1892 The Johnson County War</p>	<p>1890 Sitting Bull killed during an attempt to arrest him</p> <p>Chief Big Foot and his followers killed by US Army troops at the Wounded Knee Massacre</p>

The development of the West frequently produced conflict and tension between people trying to make a living. Often it was hard for law enforcers to keep peace in towns as the populations were often too great for them to control and maintain. Settlers elected sheriffs and lawmen but the justice system was influenced by the same conflicts that created crime. These were:

- ◆ **Poverty**— most people struggled to make a living
- ◆ **Geography**— territories too large for sheriffs to control
- ◆ **Vigilantes**— people took law into their own hands which undermined the fair legal system.
- ◆ **Problematic lawmen**— there was a shortage of men willing to be sheriffs, those who were sheriffs were often ex-outlaws.
- ◆ **Weak justice system**— Governors and lawmen were often corrupt and took bribes from gangs committing the crimes.
- ◆ **Conflict over resources**— ranchers and homesteaders often fought over land and resources.

The importance of Wyatt Earp

In cow towns crime rate was high due to the large amount of **drinking, gambling and prostitution** carried out by cowboys. Rich businessmen who came to town to make money did not like this behaviour and wanted **sheriffs and marshals** in the towns. A prime example of this is **Wyatt Earp (1848-1929)** who was a pow-

Wyatt Earp: key events

Wyatt Earp becomes a lawman after facing down rowdy cowboys	Earp first got into law enforcement in May 1874. He was involved in a fight in the cow town of Wichita and was arrested. Just then, a rowdy group of cowboys started making trouble in the town. Earp helped the deputy marshal to restore order and the mayor of Wichita offered him the job of deputy marshal. Earp moved on to be marshal in Dodge City until 1879, at which point he moved to Tombstone, Arizona Territory.
Tombstone's conflict was between big businessmen and ranchers	Tombstone was a boom town and was controlled by rich mine owners and businessmen. Against them was a faction of ranchers and cowboys, mostly from Texas, led by two ranching families: the Clantons and the McLaurys. In 1880, the rich businessmen hired Wyatt Earp as deputy sheriff to bring order to the town.
Tombstone becomes increasingly lawless	There were clashes between the Earps (Wyatt and his two brothers), and the Clantons and McLaurys, as the lawmen tried to recover stolen horses and mules. The cowboys made more trouble through 1881, rustling cattle and robbing stagecoaches. Rumours spread that the Earps had been involved in the stagecoach robberies, too: the Earps and their supporters strongly denied this.
The Earps win the gunfight at the OK Corral	In a gunfight on 26 October 1881, near Tombstone's OK Corral, the Earps killed Tom and Frank McLaury and Billy Clanton. Virgil Earp, the city marshal, claimed that he had intended only to disarm the men, but they opened fire first. Some townspeople doubted this story.
The Earps and cowboys continue to feud	Trouble continued, with the cowboys shooting Virgil and killing Morgan Earp in 1882. Wyatt shot the two men he claimed were responsible for killing his brother. Opinion turned against the Earps: their violent approach to law-keeping had only caused more conflict and Wyatt had become a murderer with no regard for the law. Wyatt and his brothers were forced to flee Tombstone.

Despite business rivalries leading to lawlessness, as in **Tombstone**, in general lawlessness **decreased as settlement developed**. When more families became settling in the West, residents began to vote in town governments who passed laws to **restrict gun laws**; as a result western towns became more peaceful. Once technology developed different towns could be connected by **rail and electric telegraphy**. This meant law officers could keep in contact with the superior state government and federal governments had closer links with the marshals. As towns became more settled, violent actions such as those of the Earps and **Billy the Kid** (see next page) became the exception and people wanted a better government.

K.T 3.2: Conflict and tension

The Johnson County War (1892)

The armed conflict between different groups of settlers on the Plains became known as the 'range wars'; named after the cattle industries open ranges. These conflicts often centred around disagreements over land and power of the Plains. The Johnson County war was a range war between cattle barons against homesteaders and small ranchers.

Causes of the Johnson County War

Tensions in Wyoming

In 1870 there were only 9,000 US citizens in the Wyoming Territory and almost all of the land was owned by the government. When railroads were built through the territory in the late 1860s, huge cattle ranches developed. As more rich ranchers moved to the area respectable cattlemen were appointed in government positions. However the winter of 1886-87 cause huge losses to the industry and people questioned the power of big ranches. Smaller ranches did better during the winter but many big ranchers claimed they stole their cattle. Cattle rustling had often been a problem, but now big ranches were struggling to survive. Big ranches set up the **Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA)** to ban small ranchers accused of rustling. The problem was that juries made up of small ranchers and homesteaders disliked the big ranches as they claimed so much land, so small rancher never got punished for rustling.

The Killing of Ella Watson and Jim Averill

Ella Watson and **Jim Averill** farmed a homestead of 670 acres in the middle of an opened range owned by **Albert Bothwell**. Although Watson and Averill had a legal claim to the land, Bothwell wanted them gone. Despites flared and Averill wrote an article in the local newspaper denouncing Bothwell and large ranches. In 1889, Watson bought a small herd of cattle to farm on their homestead. Bothwell and his workers accused her of stealing from their open range; they seized Watson and Averill and hanged them. Afterwards Bothwell took their land and their cattle for himself. Soon other big ranchers followed Bothwell's actions, leaving three smaller ranch owners dead. The homesteaders and small ranchers created their own association in 1892. one of their main policies was an early round-up of cattle before the WSGA's, meaning they could claim all unbranded new calves.

The trail of the Invaders

After the events of the war, Johnson County wanted justice for those killed. However the court case against the Invaders was a failure. This is because:

- 1) The invaders had powerful friends, including a state **governor, a judge, US marshal and two US senators** who supported the WSGA.
- 2) The governor requested that troops be sent to the TA ranch to stop further bloodshed. The troops then moved the Invaders away from Johnson County.
- 3) They were sent to Fort Fetterman so they were protected from vigilantes who wanted to lynch them.
- 4) The WSGA hired the **best Chicago lawyers** to defend the Invaders.
- 5) The lawyers convinced the judge a fair trail was impossible in Johnson County so the trail was moved to Cheyenne where the jury would be made up of rich men instead of small ranchers and homesteaders.
- 6) Knowing **Johnson County was short of money** the lawyers extended the trail as long as possible until the County ran out of money and they had to drop the case. **Non of the Invaders were pun-**

The invasion of Johnson County

The WSGA organised an invasion of Johnson County to **kill 70 men** who they believed were carrying out and encouraging rustling of their cattle. They raised funds of **\$100,000** to pay for hired guns to do the killing for them and to cover any legal fees for their actions. All of this was made with full knowledge of Wyoming's governor. On their way to Johnson County the '**Invaders**', as the **WSGA** were known, went off plan to go to a ranch where two of the men on their hit list were. A gun fight broke out and word soon reached Johnson County's sheriff. The sheriff quickly raised an army of 40 men. Outraged citizens joined to protect their homes and families. **The invasion was a failure** when the Invaders had to hide at the **TA ranch**, surrounded by 300 angry Johnson County residents, until the US army came to save them.

Significance

The Johnson County wars highlight the public support of vigilantes in the West. Many saw the actions of the rich cattlemen and justice for homesteaders stealing their cattle. The wars highlight the West's support for **vigilante justice** as central to the frontiers solutions to lawlessness.

However there was a positive of the war. After this event ranches, both big and small, started to use **barbed wire** to fence off all their

K.T 3.2: Conflict and tension

Billy the Kid

Billy the Kid (real name:) grew up in a mining camp in **New Mexico**. He never held down a stable job and when he was 15 he got in trouble for stealing butter. Since then he was involved in more thefts, including cattle rustling.

In 1878, Billy became involved in conflict between cattle baron **John Chisum** and settlers/small ranchers. Conflict broke out and **Billy sided with Chisum** acting as a hired gun. This war part of the Lincoln County war.

Once the war was over Billy swore to kill everyone who had murdered his friends/gang members in the war. His gang had many hide away throughout New Mexico and he gained public support.

A new sheriff, **Pat Garret**, was appointed to end the conflict and tension in New Mexico. He made it his mission to hunt down Billy. Garret tracked Billy down and arrested him. The court sentences him to death for his crimes, but due to guards errors, Billy made a **dramatic escape from jail**. Garret once again tracked him



Why is Billy the Kid important?

Although Billy the Kid was a notorious thief and a murderer, he was seen by many as an exciting, reckless, romantic figure. Newspapers and novels told stories of him which excited people in the West. Billy the Kid is significant to law and order in the West because:

- 1) **Powerless people**, such as the poor, ethnic minorities, small ranchers and homesteaders, liked the way he stood up against the rich northern businessmen who were taking the west for themselves.
- 2) He **helped cattle barons** keep their lands by acting as a hired gun (a modern day hit man). He sought out those who challenged castle barons for control over the land
- 3) The justice system in Lincoln County was too weak and corrupt to deal with Billy. He **highlighted the problems of law and order** and the need for the US government to intervene and help lawmen keep control.

Conflict with the Plains Indians

From the **1830s** to **1870s**, different Plains Indians tribes had agreed treaties with the US government to protect their lifestyle. Yet they continually witnessed these **treaties fail**. The figure to the right summarizes key events and consequences of conflicts between the Plains Indians and the white settlers. However tension came to a tipping point over conflict over the **Black Hill**, sacred Indian land.

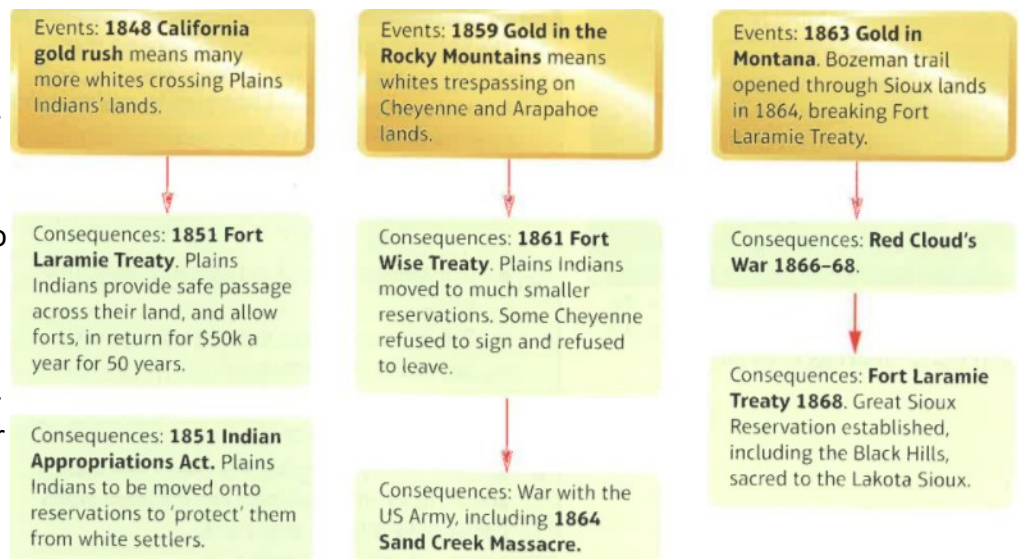


Figure 3.6 Key events and their consequences in the conflicts over use of the Plains Indians' lands 1848-68.

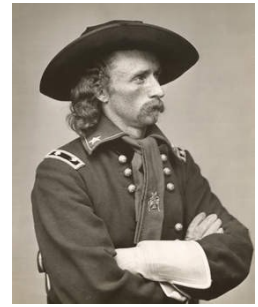
K.T 3.2: Conflict and tension

The Battle of Little Bighorn (June 1876)

Conflict over the Black Hills.

1874, the **Northern Pacific Railroad** was approaching **Sioux hunting grounds** in Dakota. US army commander **George Armstrong Custer** led an expedition of the **7th Cavalry** to protect those building the railroads. However Custer used this for personal gains to prospect for gold in the **Black Hills**. Within months thousands of settlers had followed Custer staking a claim to Indian sacred land. The Sioux tribes were outraged, especially since this act was a clear breach of the **1869 Fort Laramie Treaty**. This tension caused many consequences such as:

1. The US government offered to buy the Black Hills from the Sioux for **\$6 million**, or pay them **\$400,000 a year** for the right to mine for gold there. This went against Plains Indians' belief about owning land so was rejected and the Sioux carried out raids on settlers.
2. Believing they had been betrayed by the government the Sioux and Cheyenne warriors left their reservations and joined together with **Sitting Bull** and **Crazy Horse** as their leaders.
3. In **December 1875**, the government ordered the Sioux to return to their reservations. They were given **six days** to return, after that President Grant stated any Indians off reservations could be attacked.
4. Deep snow in the winter meant that it was impossible for Indians to return to the reservations. In response, by **spring 1876** more than **7,000 Sioux**, **2,000 of whom were warriors**, had set up communities between the Powder and Rosebud rivers..



Impacts of the battle.

Until Little Bighorn, public opinion had been that the Plains Indians were weak savages, now they were seen as a real threat to white Americans. People believed if the Sioux could defeat Custer, one of the army's greatest leaders, then they would be a massive threat to Manifest Destiny and settlement. There was enormous pressure on the government to crush Plains Indians' resistance after 1876. Government policies now move towards destroying Plains Indians' way of life.

Plains Indians must be kept on reservations— the US army relentlessly hunted down Sioux and Cheyenne tribes to force them back onto reservations. Short of ammunition and food supplies by the end of 1876 almost all the Sioux and Cheyenne were confined to reservations and were completely dependent on the US government.

Previous treaties were ignored— the government decided the battle of 1876 had given up any rights Indians had to previous treaties. As punishment Indians were forced onto **smaller reservations with poor conditions**. The Sioux were told to give up the Black Hills or they would face starvation on the reservations. As a result the Sioux were forced to give up the **Black Hills, Powder River County and the Big Horn mountains**.

Military control of the Plains Indians was maintained— the Sioux's weapons and horses were taken away from them and they were forced to live under military control.

In the spring of 1877, **Crazy Horse** was forced to surrender to the US army. He was killed in the Autumn while supposedly resisting arrest.

The Battle

The US army planned to attack the Sioux tribes to force them back onto the reservations. On the **25th June 1876**, Custer reached the camp of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. The **Indian camp had 2,000 warriors** and Custer's army **only had 600 men**. Despite warning from his scouts to wait for backup, Custer decided to launch an attack. Custer decided to split his men into two groups so they could surround the Indian camp and attack from both sides. **125 men** were sent under the control of **Major Reno**, **125 men** were sent with **Major Benteen**, whilst Custer took the rest to the north of the Indian camp. However Custer's plan was a disaster. Reno's men were attacked by Indians very early on and took up refuge, he was later joined by Benteen who suffered the same fate. Custer, now with no backup, attacked the Indian camp. Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, who had already evacuated the women and children, took an army of **2,000 warriors** against Custer. Half of the Sioux stayed at the village to fight while Crazy Horse led the rest of the warriors to surround Custer. **Greatly outnumbered Custer and all his men died.**

K.T 3.3: The destruction of Plains' Indian way of life

The hunting and extermination of the buffalo

Throughout the development of the Plains the US government encouraged the slaughtering of the buffalo. Buffalo herd had experienced hardship through repeated droughts in the 1840s and from diseases brought to the Plains by cattle and horses. These conditions meant that in the 1870s and 1880s the buffalo were weak and vulnerable, resulting in the easy and rapid extermination period by white Americans. By 1883, the once-vast herd of buffalo had gone.

North

The Great Sioux reservations protected the northern herds until 1876. Before this the government had allowed the Sioux to control buffalo breeding land. In 1876 the Northern Pacific Railroads reached Sioux land and the extermination of buffalo was encouraged. By 1883 the northern herds were gone.

South

During 1872-74 professional buffalo hunters killed around four and half million buffalo, compared to the one million killed by Plains Indians for food. Extermination was strongly enforced in the south as the US government wanted control over the Plains and encouraged white settlement.

Extermination in



Government policy and extermination

- ◆ Plains Indians refused to go onto reservation as long as there were buffalo to hunt.
- ◆ Treaties gave Indians the right to hunting land outside their reservations, but there was a clause. If there were no buffalo to hunt the right of the hunting land would be taken away from the Indians
- ◆ Plains Indians resisted the construction of railroads because the buffalo required land
- ◆ Without the buffalo to hunt Indians were more willing to adopt white American's way of life and often relied on the government for food.
- ◆ Some congressmen were considered with the extermination of a species, in 1874 congress proposed a fine of \$100 for any non-Native to kill female buffalos. This policy never came into action and was blocked by President Grant.

Economic reason for extermination

- A very efficient process of killing was developed using the powerful Sharps' rifle
- Before 1870 buffalo had been hunter for their warm coats which made clothing. However in 1871 a process was discovered which made it easy to turn buffalo hide (skin) into leather belts for machines in big industries.
- The price for buffalo hide was between \$1-\$3, therefore people saw it as a easy way to make money.
- Railroads brought hunter to the Plains for a cheap price and made buffalo hunting easier for hunters
- Extermination of the buffalo opened up the Plains for cattle farming and settlers. Cattle rancher brought a lot of money in for the US government.



Impacts of Plains Indians

The loss of buffalo shattered the Plains Indians way of life. Some Indians used their skills of managing cattle to become cattle ranchers, but the cattle herds were affected badly by disease. Poor harvest also meant that any Indians who had turned to farming also suffered. Reservation Indians relied on the government for food, but were often restricted and food rations were introduced as method of punishment if resistance ever occurred.

K.T 3.3: The destruction of Plains' Indian way of life

The Plains Indians' life on reservations

The US government forced Plains Indians onto reservations and slowly began to take away their reservations. By the **1880s** white opinion was agreed that allowing Indians to keep large reservations where they could live in tipis and hunt the buffalo meant they tried to cling on to their old way of life. As a result reservation life in the **1880s** began to phase out and Plains Indians were forced to assimilate (follow) American way of life. In order to make this happen life on the reservations began to change.



Source D
 Two photographs of the same three Lakota Sioux boys. The one on the left was taken when they arrived at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania in 1879. The one on the right was taken six months later.

How did the government force Indians to adopt American way of life?	
The power of Tribal Chiefs	Signing treaties with tribes was often difficult because powerful chiefs, such as Sitting Bull , refused to lose land. In the early 1880s the government set up councils among tribes. These councils took power away from the chiefs as the councils were responsible for negotiations with the government and looked after the people on the reservation. However, the members of the council were heavily influenced by the US government through threats and bribes. Slowly the Plains Indians lost the ability to govern themselves.
Education and religion	Plains Indian boys and girls were sent to schools that were off-reservation. They were taught to speak, read, and write English and taught to have no respect for Native American way of life. They were also brought up as Christians. If Plains Indian children were
Reservation size	Despite the Fort Laramie Treaty stating that three quarters of adult males in a tribe need to agree to changes of treaties, the US government often cut the sizes of reservations down without agreements from tribes. In 1889 the Plains Indians were forced to accept reduction to reservation sizes and six small Sioux reservations were created (see map)
Government agents	Agents of the government used bribes of increased food rations and medical supplies as a method of managing the behaviour of Plains Indian councils. Often many Plains Indians would join the Indian Agency Police just to be fed, clothed, and sheltered. The job
Living condition on reservations	Extinction of the buffalo and the restriction of movement had all but destroyed the Plains Indian way of life. On reservations a nomadic hunting existence was no longer permitted, therefore Natives looked for a new way of living. On reservations Plains Indians were forced to become farmers, but the land given to them was mostly land too dry for farming. As a result crops failed and pests and diseases spread. The tribes became dependent on the government for basic things such as food and clothing. Soon disease, alcoholism, and depression spread through the reservations. The government continued to break up Plains Indian society as they believed it would help to sway Indi-

K.T 3.3: The destruction of Plains' Indian way of life

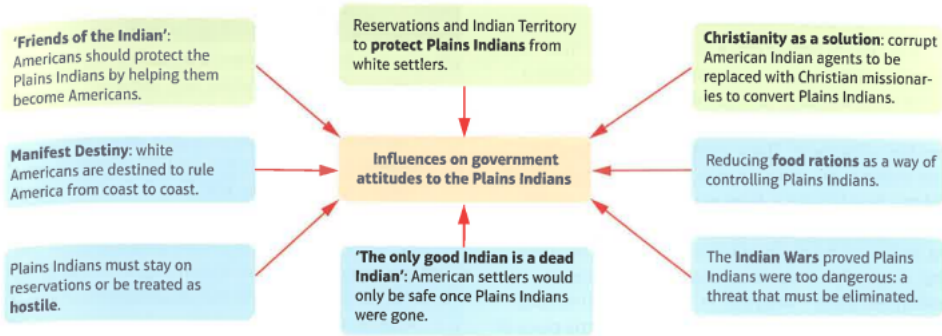


Figure 3.8 Influences on government attitudes to the Plains Indians.

Changing attitudes to the Plains Indians

Many white Americans were still unhappy with the fact that Plains Indians were given land to farm on, yet were not using the land effectively. On reservations Plains Indians still lived as tribes, sharing food and money together instead of competing against each other for land and money like white people did. However some Americans saw the treatment of Plains Indians on reservation as unchristian and wanted change. The government policies towards Natives changed too, they no longer fought with Indians over land as reservations had ensured the majority of land belonged to the US government and settlers not Plains Indians. During

The Dawes Act (1887)

The Dawes Act as like a Homestead Act of Plains Indians. Each Plains Indian family was allotted a 160-acre share of reservation land, single Plains Indians were given **80-acres** and orphans who were under 18 got **40-acres**. The majority of Plains Indians took up this offer and left the reservations. Reservation land was then sold to white settlers. The only condition was that once on a plot of land Plains Indians lived in house, farmed and adopted American lifestyle. However many Plains Indians found it too difficult and too expensive to farm on the plains, so many sold their plots to white settlers and were forced back onto smaller reservations. As a result life became event harder for Plains Indians.

Significance of Dawes Act:

- Freed up reservation land for settlers
- Encouraged Plain Indians to become American citizens
- Reduced to amount the federal government were spending on reservations



The Wounded Knee Massacre (1890)

By the **1880s** the atmosphere among Plains Indians on reservations was one of despair. However on Plains Indians, **Wovoka**, claimed to have a vision telling him that is all Indians rejected the reservations and joined together in the **Ghost Dance** (a sacred dance) the **Great Spirit** would bring back to life all the Plains Indians killed by the US army. The Ghost Dance spread rapidly through the reservations.

In order to take control of the situation **President Harrison** ordered the US army to go into reservations. **Sitting Bull** was killed when they tried to arrest him as they falsely believed he was starting a rebellion. Sitting Bull's followers fled to safety by the army caught up to them in and took them to Wounded Knee Creek. In general confusion a shot was fired and then the army open fired. In ten minutes **250 Sioux** Indians were killed. This massacre was the last clash between the US army and the Sioux Indians.

Reaction to the massacre was generally positive. Many whites saw the massacre as revenge for the Battle of Little Big Horn. Most were relieved that a so-called resistance had been stopped. Historians argue that the massacre highlighted that white Americans saw Indians as wild and the fear white Americans had that Indians might band together and overpower the

The American West; 1835-95

Key Topic 3: Conflict and conquest, c1876-1895

Possible exam Questions

Explain 2 consequences of ... (8 marks—2 x 4 marks)

1. Explain two consequences of the winter of 1886-87 for the cattle industry
2. Explain two consequences of the Dawes Act (1887)
3. Explain two consequences of the Johnson County war.
4. Explain two consequences of the Battle of Little Bighorn (1876)

Write a narrative account analysing... (8 marks)

Write a narrative account analysing the increasing settlement of the West in the years 1876-1895. You may use the following:

- The Exoduster movement (1879)
- The Oklahoma Land Rush (1893)

Write a narrative account analysing the Johnson County. You may include the following:

- Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA)
- The role of Ella Watson and Jim Averill

Write a narrative account analysing the Battle of Little Bighorn. You may include the following:

- Custer's mistakes
- The leadership of Crazy Horse

Write a narrative account analysing the destruction of the buffalo between the years 1870-1883. You may include the following:

- Government policies
- The role of the North and South.

Explain two of the following; the importance of x for y (16 marks— 2 x 8 marks)

1. The importance of new technology in the development of farming on the Great Plains.
2. The importance of Wyatt Earp in cow towns to control lawlessness.
3. The importance of the Battle of Little Big Horn (1876) for the government attitudes towards the Plains Indians.
4. The importance of the Oklahoma Land Rush (1893) for the settlement of the West.
5. The importance of the reservation for the destruction of Plains Indian's way of life.
6. The importance of the 'Great Die Up' for the end of the open ranges.
7. The importance of the Johnson County war for vigilante justice.
8. The importance of industrial products for the developments in farming.