Following the Civil War, the United States grew at an even greater rate. Settlers flocked to the West and immigrants came to the great eastern cities to work in new factories. While the nation’s economy grew strong, not everyone shared equally in the wealth, and reformers worked for equal rights and equal opportunity for all citizens.

- The settling of the Plains and the growth of industry helped the United States become an agricultural and industrial leader.
- America’s tremendous growth also led to problems within society, which a number of reformers attempted to resolve.
Mother and child in a Wyoming wheat field

- Mother and child in a Wyoming wheat field

1860 1875 1890

1862 Homestead Act gives free land to settlers
1869 Transcontinental railroad links East and West
1890 Battle at Wounded Knee; Populist Party forms

Populist Party banner
The Mining Booms

Geography shapes the physical, economic, and political challenges a region faces. Rail lines and mining speeded the flow of settlers to the West.

Ranchers and Farmers

Geography shapes the physical, economic, and political challenges a region faces. Following the Civil War, settlers began to move west in great numbers.

Native American Struggles

Differences in economic, political, and social beliefs and practices can lead to division within a nation and have lasting consequences. The settlement of white people in the West forced change on the Native Americans of the Plains.

Farmers in Protest

Reactions to social injustice can lead to reform movements. In the late 1800s, farmers began to band together in groups and associations to fight their problems.

View the Chapter 15 video in the Glencoe Video Program.

Foldables Study Organizer

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

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

Creating pictures in your mind as you read—called visualizing—is a powerful aid to understanding. If you can visualize what you read, selections will be more vivid, and you will recall them better later. Authors use descriptive language to create a picture of a person, location, time, or event. These words appeal to the senses and may evoke sights, sounds, or smells. Authors also use words to describe feelings and emotions to make the text come alive to the reader. Good readers take the time to visualize people, places, and events. As you read the following paragraphs, make a picture in your mind of life in a boomtown.

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

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

—from page 668
Many cowhands were veterans of the Confederate army. Some were African Americans who moved west in search of a better life after the Civil War. Others were Hispanics. In fact, the traditions of cattle herding began with Hispanic ranch hands in the Spanish Southwest. These vaqueros (vah • KEHR • ohs) developed many of the skills—riding, roping, and branding—that cowhands used on the drives. Much of the language of the rancher today is derived from Spanish words used by vaqueros for centuries. Even the word ranch comes from the Spanish word rancho.

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

—from page 674
You read earlier about how the California Gold Rush brought thousands of people to California to try to make their fortunes. In the late 1850s, many more miners headed west as more precious metals were discovered.

Focusing on the Main Ideas
- In the late 1850s, discoveries of gold and silver sent miners flocking to the American West. (page 667)
- A number of boomtowns grew quickly in the mining areas of the West. (page 668)
- Railroads grew rapidly in the period following the Civil War. (page 669)

Locating Places
Pikes Peak
Virginia City, Nevada
Promontory Summit

Meeting People
Leland Stanford

Content Vocabulary
lode (LOHD)
ore
boomtown
vigilante (VIH•juh•LAN•tee)
subsidy (SUHB•suh•dee)
transcontinental (TRANS•kah•tuhn•EHN•tuhl)

Academic Vocabulary
extract (ihk•STRAKT)
obtain (uhb•TAYN)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pikes Peak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comstock Lode</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promontory Summit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where & When?
1855
- Gold is discovered at Pikes Peak

1869
- Transcontinental railroad links East and West

1876
- Colorado joins the Union

History Social Science Standards
US8.12 Students analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution.
Mining Is Big Business

Main Idea In the late 1850s, discoveries of gold and silver sent miners flocking to the American West.

Reading Connection Have you ever wanted to take part in a great adventure? Read to find out about the gold and silver rushes that lured thousands of Americans into the West.

An American Story

“We’ll need no pick or spade, no shovel, pan, or hoe, the largest chunks are ‘top of ground. . . . We’ll see hard times no more, and want [we’ll] never know, when once we’ve filled our sacks with gold, Way out in Idaho.”

—from Way Out in Idaho

Miners sang this hopeful song as they headed for new places where gold had been discovered.

Searching for Gold and Silver By the mid-1850s, the California Gold Rush had ended. Miners, still hoping to strike it rich, began prospecting in other parts of the West.

In 1858 a mining expedition found gold on the slopes of Pikes Peak in the Colorado Rockies. Newspapers claimed that miners were making $20 a day panning for gold—a large sum at a time when servants made less than a dollar a day. By the spring of 1859, about 50,000 prospectors had flocked to Colorado. Their slogan was “Pikes Peak or Bust.”

Prospectors skimmed gold dust from streams or scratched particles of gold from the surface of the land. Most of the gold, however, was deep in underground lodes (LOHDZ), rich streaks of ore sandwiched between layers of rock. Mining this rock, or ore, and then extracting the gold required expensive machinery, many workers, and an organized business.

Companies made up of several investors had a better chance of getting rich in the goldfields than individual miners did. Mining companies soon replaced the lone miner.

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

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

Describe What was the Comstock Lode?
The Mining Frontier

Main Idea  A number of boomtowns grew quickly in the mining areas of the West.

Reading Connection  Have you ever seen a deserted section of a city where a factory has closed? Read to find out what happened to many mining towns in the West after the gold or silver in nearby mines was gone.

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

Boomtowns were lively, and often lawless, places. Money came quickly—and was often spent just as quickly through extravagant living and gambling. A fortunate miner could earn as much as $2,000 a year, about four times the annual salary of a teacher at that time. Still food, lodging, clothing, and other goods were expensive in the boomtowns, draining miners’ earnings.

Violence was part of everyday life in boomtowns. Few boomtowns had police or prisons, so citizens sometimes took the law into their own hands. These vigilantes (vi•juh•LAN•tees) dealt out their own brand of justice without benefit of judge or jury, often hanging the accused person from the nearest tree.

Women in the Boomtowns  Boomtowns were largely men’s towns in the early days.

Men outnumbered women by two to one in Virginia City, and children made up less than 10 percent of the population.

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

Changing Industry  Many mining “booms” were followed by “busts.” When the mines no longer yielded ore, people left the towns, and the deserted mine towns became known as ghost towns. At its peak in the 1870s, Virginia City had about 30,000 inhabitants. By 1900 its population had dropped to fewer than 4,000. Toward the end of the rush, gold and silver mining in some places gave way to the mining of other metals. Copper became the key metal found in Montana, New Mexico, and Arizona in the 1870s.

Mining helped the economy, but it hurt the environment. Wildlife was hunted to provide meat for the miners. Mining led to high levels of arsenic and mercury in the ground that contaminated land, lakes, and rivers.

What Were the New States?  Frontier areas around the boomtowns eventually became states. Colorado joined the United States in 1876. North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, and Montana became states in 1889. Wyoming and Idaho were admitted to the Union in 1890.

Reading Check  Explain  Why did the population drop in many boomtowns?
Railroads Connect East to West

Main Idea  Railroads grew rapidly in the period following the Civil War.

Reading Connection  Would you like to travel across the country by train? Read to find out how the first railroad to connect the east and west coasts was completed in 1869.

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

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

Railroad construction was often supported by large government subsidies (SUHB•suh•dees)—financial aid and land grants from the government. Railroad executives pushed for free public land on which to lay track because a rail network would benefit the entire nation. The national government and states agreed. In all, the federal government granted more than 130 million acres of land to the railroad companies.

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

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TECHNOLOGY & History

Steam Locomotive

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

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

1. The firebox burns coal, wood, or sometimes oil.
2. Water in the boiler, heated by gases from the firebox, creates steam.
3. The smokebox draws hot gases from the firebox and keeps an even fire.
4. In the steam header tank, the heated steam expands and creates great pressure.
5. Hot steam is piped to the pistons. The pistons power the drive rods, which in turn push the drive wheels.
States and local communities also helped the railroads. Towns offered cash subsidies to make sure that railroads came to their communities. For example, Los Angeles gave the Southern Pacific Railroad money and paid for a passenger terminal to ensure that the railroad would pass through its town.

**Spanning the Continent** The search for a route for a transcontinental (trans·kah·nuhn·tuhn·uhn·tuhl) rail line—one that would span the continent and connect the Atlantic and Pacific coasts—began in the 1850s. During the Civil War, the Union government chose a northerly route for the line. The government offered land grants to railroad companies that were willing to build the transcontinental railroad.

The challenge was enormous—laying track for more than 1,700 miles across hot plains and through rugged mountains. Two companies accepted the challenge. The Union Pacific Company began laying track westward from Omaha, Nebraska, while the Central Pacific Company worked eastward from Sacramento, California. The two companies competed fiercely. Each wanted to cover a greater distance in order to receive more of the government subsidies.

The Central Pacific hired about 10,000 Chinese laborers to work on its tracks. The first Chinese were hired in 1865 at about $28 per month. The Union Pacific relied on Irish and African American workers. All workers toiled for low wages in harsh conditions. In the choking heat of summer and the icy winds of winter, they cleared forests, blasted tunnels through mountains, and laid hundreds of miles of track. In the end, the Union Pacific workers laid 1,038 miles of track; Central Pacific workers laid 742 miles over a much harsher terrain.

**The Transcontinental Railway** On May 10, 1869, construction was completed. A Chinese crew was chosen to lay the final 10 miles of track, which was completed in only 12 hours. The two sets of track met at Promontory Summit in Utah Territory.
Leland Stanford, governor of California, drove a final golden spike into a tie to join the two railroads. According to Grenville Dodge, chief engineer for the Union Pacific:

“Prayer was offered; a number of spikes were driven in the two adjoining rails. . . . The engineers ran up their locomotives until they touched . . . and thus the two roads were welded into one great trunk line from the Atlantic to the Pacific.”

—from Mine Eyes Have Seen

What Effects Did Railroads Have? By 1883 two more transcontinental lines and dozens of shorter lines connected cities in the West with the rest of the nation. The railroads brought thousands of workers to the West. Trains carried metals and produce east and manufactured goods west. As more tracks were laid, more steel was needed, and the demand boosted the nation’s steel industry. Coal producers, railroad car manufacturers, and construction companies also thrived as the railroads spread across the West.

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

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

Reading Check Identify To what California city did the transcontinental railroad extend?
You learned that the transcontinental railroad linked the East and the West in 1869. The new railroads promoted ranching and farming in the Great Plains and the West.

Cattle ranching in Texas became a profitable business once the new railroad reached the Great Plains. (page 673)

The work of the cowhands who drove the cattle north from Texas to the railroads was both difficult and dangerous. (page 674)

Free land and new farming methods brought many settlers to the Great Plains. (page 676)

Locating Places
Sedalia, Missouri
Abilene, Kansas
Dodge City, Kansas
Cheyenne, Wyoming

Content Vocabulary
open range
brand
vaquero \(\text{(vah•KEHR•oh)}\)
homestead \(\text{(HOHM•STEHD)}\)
sodbuster \(\text{(SAHD•BUHS•tuhr)}\)
dry farming

Academic Vocabulary
derive \(\text{(dih•RYV)}\)
acquire \(\text{(uh•KWYR)}\)

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

1860 1875 1890

1862 Homestead Act gives free land to settlers
1867 Town of Abilene founded
1889 Oklahoma land rush takes place

History
Social Science Standards
US8.11 Students analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction.

US8.12 Students analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution.
Cattle on the Plains

Main Idea: Cattle ranching in Texas became a profitable business once the new railroad reached the Great Plains.

Reading Connection: Have you seen large trucks on highways carrying food and supplies to stores? Read to find out about the long, difficult journey that cowhands had to make in order for America’s eastern cities to get beef in the mid-1800s.

An old Texas cowhand, E.C. Abbott, recalled the early days of riding the trail:

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

—from We Pointed Them North

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

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

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

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

What was the Long Drive?: The sudden increase in the longhorns’ value began what became known as the Long Drive—the herding of cattle 1,000 miles or more to meet the railroads. The drives left Texas in the spring, when there was enough grass along the way to feed the cattle. During the heyday of the “Cattle Kingdom,” from the late 1860s to the mid-1880s, the trails carried more than 5 million cattle north.

Reading Check: Explain Why did the value of cattle increase in the mid-1860s?

Nat Love was one of many African Americans who rode the cattle trails.
Main Idea  The work of the cowhands who drove the cattle north from Texas to the railroads was both difficult and dangerous.

Reading Connection  What do you know about cowhands in the old West based on the movies you have seen? Read to find out about the hazards faced by cowhands on the trail and what life in the “Wild West” was really like.

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

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

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

Hazards on the Trail  During the months on the trail, the cowhands faced violent storms, rustlers who tried to steal cattle, and many other dangers. They had to drive the herds across swift-flowing rivers, where cattle could be lost. One of the greatest dangers on the trail was the stampede, when thousands of cattle ran in panic.

History Through Art  Jerked Down by Charles Russell  Celebrated for his detailed and dramatic scenes of Western life, Charles Russell depicts cowhands on their horses lassoing cattle.  Where did the traditions of cattle herding begin?
Any sudden sound—a roar of thunder or the crack of a gunshot—could set off the cattle. Then the cowhands had to race on horseback with the stampeding cattle and bring them under control.

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

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

Ranching Becomes Big Business Ranchers were building herds in Wyoming, Montana, and other territories. At the same time, sheep ranchers were moving their flocks across the range, and farmers were trying to cultivate crops. Competition over land use and access resulted in range wars. After much loss of life, the range was fenced off with a new invention—barbed wire—which enabled hundreds of square miles to be fenced off cheaply and easily.

At first, ranchers saw barbed wire as more of a threat than an opportunity. They did not want to abandon open grazing and complained when farmers put up barriers that prevented livestock from roaming freely. Soon, however, ranchers used barbed wire to shut out those competing with them for land and to keep their animals closer to sources of food and water. For cowhands, barbed wire ended the excitement of long cattle drives. Ranch hands replaced cowboys.

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

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

The price collapse of the mid-1880s marked the end of the “Cattle Kingdom.” The cattle industry survived, but was changed forever. Another type of life would rise on the Plains—farming.

Describe How did the Hispanics influence life in the West?
Farmers Settle the Plains

Main Idea Free land and new farming methods brought many settlers to the Great Plains.

Reading Connection Have you ever experienced a drought or flood? Read on to learn about what farmers faced on the Great Plains, including droughts, flooding, plagues of insects, and harsh winters.

The early pioneers who reached the Great Plains did not believe they could farm the dry, treeless area. In the late 1860s, however, farmers began settling there and planting crops. Before long, much of the Plains became farmland. In 1872 a Nebraska settler wrote,

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

—from Settling the West

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

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

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

Steamship companies went to great lengths to advertise the American Plains in Scandinavia. By 1880 more than 100,000 Swedes and Norwegians had settled in the northern Plains—Minnesota and the Dakotas. The Scandinavian influence remains strong in this region today.

Soon after the Civil War ended, many African American soldiers, called “Buffalo Soldiers,” served in the West. Thousands of African Americans also migrated from the Southern states into Kansas in the late 1870s. They called themselves “Exodusters,” from the biblical book of Exodus, which describes the Jews’ escape from slavery in Egypt.
African Americans had fought in military conflicts since colonial times. Many had served and died during the Civil War.

When Congress set up the peacetime army after the Civil War, it also organized four segregated regiments of African American soldiers and cavalry, the 9th Cavalry, 10th Cavalry, 24th Infantry, and 25th Infantry. Many African Americans joined because of the opportunity for steady pay and a pension. These soldiers first served on the western frontier.

These segregated units answered the nation’s call to arms not only in the West, but also in Cuba, the Philippines, Hawaii, and Mexico. They fought in the Indian Wars and served in the western United States from 1867 until 1896. According to legend, the men were called “Buffalo Soldiers” by the Apache and Cheyenne. The name was adopted by the African American soldiers as a sign of honor and respect.

The Buffalo Soldiers did not, however, receive equal treatment from the Anglo American settlers or soldiers. The Buffalo Soldiers were sometimes harassed and abused. Despite being mistreated, these regiments overcame hardships to become among the most decorated military units in the United States Army.

The army, recognizing the courage of the Buffalo Soldiers, presented the Medal of Honor to at least 20 Buffalo Soldiers for service during the wars in the American West. The Buffalo Soldiers also received commendations for their bravery in other wars and conflicts, including the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II.

In 1992 Colin Powell, who then served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, dedicated a memorial to the Buffalo Soldiers in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In recognition, Powell noted that “since 1641 there has never been a time in this country when Blacks were unwilling to serve and sacrifice for America.”
The Farmers’ Frontier  The climate of the Plains presented farmers with a great challenge. Generally there was little rainfall, but in some years rain came down in torrents, destroying crops and flooding homesteads. The other extreme—drought—also threatened crops and lives. Fire was another enemy. In times of drought, brushfires swept rapidly through a region, destroying crops, livestock, and homes.

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

In winters winds howled across the open Plains, and deep snow could bury animals and trap families in their homes. Families had to plan ahead and store food for the winter.

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

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

Although separated by great distances, people took much pleasure in getting together for weddings, church services, picnics, and other occasions. As communities grew, schools and churches began to dot the rural landscape.

New Farming Methods  The Plains could not be farmed by the usual methods of the 1860s. Most parts of the region had little rainfall and too few streams for irrigation. The Plains farmers, known as *sodbusters* (SAHD•BUHS•tuhrs), needed new methods and tools.

One approach, called *dry farming*, was to plant seeds deep in the ground where there was some moisture. Wooden plows could not penetrate the tough layer of sod, but in the late 1870s farmers could use the newly invented, lightweight steel plows to do the job.
The sodbustes had other tools to help them cultivate the Plains—windmills to pump water from deep in the ground and barbed wire fencing. With no wood to build fences, farmers used these wire fences to protect their land.

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

What Was the Oklahoma Land Rush? The last part of the Plains to be settled was the Oklahoma Territory, designated by Congress as Indian Territory in the 1830s. After years of pressure from land dealers and settlers’ groups, the federal government opened Oklahoma to homesteaders in 1889. Settlers were eager to receive title to 160 acres of land. Their only condition was to remain on, improve, and develop the property for five years.

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

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

What Did You Learn?
1. Explain why cow towns developed.
2. What new methods and tools helped settlers successfully farm the Great Plains?
3. Determining Cause and Effect Re-create the diagram below and explain how the Homestead Act encouraged settlement of the Great Plains.
4. Analyze What opportunities did settlement on the Plains provide for women and African Americans?
5. The Big Ideas How did geography influence the settlement and economic growth of the Great Plains and American West?
6. In an essay, discuss the growth, life, and decline of the Wild West in American history. Be sure to mention the geographical, economic, and social factors involved in that period in history.
By Bess Streeter Aldrich

Before You Read

The Scene: The homestead in this story is in eastern Nebraska. It is 1874.
The Characters: Will and Abbie Deal set up their homestead in 1868. Mack is their seven-year-old son. The Lutzes are their closest neighbors. The Reinmuellers live a little farther away.
The Plot: Will and his family went to Nebraska because they could own land there. Until this year, they have not had good crops because there has not been enough rain. They have also lived through a prairie fire and blizzards. Will and Abbie still believe, however, that the land is their fortune.

Vocabulary Preview

billowing: bulging or swelling out in the wind
colossal: huge, enormous
diabolical: like a devil; very evil
hazy: unclear because of smoke, dust, or clouds

Have you ever worked hard to make a wish come true? Were you able to reach your goal? Farming is an uncertain business, but it seems that Will and Abbie’s hopes may soon be realized.
The crop of 1874 was the sixth crop and it seemed to give a little more promise than the previous ones. By the twentieth of July, Will had laid by all his corn. Most of his small grain was in the shocks, but one oat field of a few acres was still uncut. Standing there under the July sun, its ripened surface seemed to reflect back the yellow rays. In the afternoon Abbie went out to pick a mess of beans. The garden had come to be Abbie's care. Aside from the potato crop, to which Will attended, she looked after the entire garden. It was quite generally so,—the men bending all their energies to bigger things, the corn and wheat and the stock, with the chickens and the gardens falling to the lot of the wives. Some of the women went into the fields. Christine Reinmueller was out beside Gus many days. Will drew the line at that. "When you have to do that, we'll quit," he said.

Abbie, in her starched sunbonnet, began picking beans for supper. She could see Will and Henry Lutz working together, shocking the last of Henry's oats. To-morrow the two would work together on Will's last stand. It was nice for the men to be so neighborly.

It seemed hazy in the west. By the time she had finished the long rows, a big panful of the yellow pods in her arms, Will had come home from the Lutzes'. In the welcome shade of the house Abbie took off her bonnet, wiped her flushed perspiring face and waited for Will to come up.

"My...it's a scorcher." She looked hot and tired.

In a moment of tenderness, more to be desired because of its rarity, Will picked up Abbie's hands. The slender nails were stubbed and broken,—the grime of the garden was on her tapering fingers. He lifted her hand suddenly and kissed the hollow of it. As his lips touched the calloused palms, his eyes filled with rare tears. He uttered a short swift oath, "I wish you didn't have to, Abbie-girl. It's tough for you. Some day...in a few years...we'll pull out. Weather conditions may change...the land will be high.... You can have better things...and your organ. That singing and painting of yours...maybe we can get to a teacher then...."

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1. **small grain**: grains, such as oat, rye, wheat; any grain that is not corn
2. **in the shocks**: grain stacked in a standing position in a field to dry
3. **mess**: enough food of one kind to serve as a meal or a dish
4. **starched**: clothing that has been made stiff
It affected Abbie as it always did. In a moment like that it seemed the end and aim of everything...the family. All her dreams for herself were as nothing. In her own moment of emotion she returned, “We’ll make it, Will...don’t worry!”

For a moment they stood together looking out over the raw rolling acreage. Even as they looked, the sun darkened and the day took on a grayness. They looked for the storm, and heard it as soon as they saw it,—a great black cloud roar out of the west, with a million little hissing vibrations. Their eyes on the sky, neither moved. Then there was a cessation of the roaring, a soft thud of dropping things, and the cloud of a billion wings lay on the fields.

“Grasshoppers,” they said simultaneously, incredulously.

The grasshoppers swarmed over the young waist-high corn and the pasture and the garden. By evening the long rows of sweet corn had been eaten to the plowed ground. The tender vines of the tomatoes were stripped down to the stalk. The buds of the fruit trees were gone. Part of the garden was a memory. The chickens had feasted themselves to the bursting point. Gus Reinmueller, driving up to the door, could hardly control his raring horses, so irritated were they by the bouncing, thumping pests. The farm was a squirming, greenish-gray mass of them.

All evening Will sat by the stove with his head in his hands. It was the first time he had visibly lost his grit. Abbie went over to him and ran her hand through his hair. She tried to think of something to console him. “Don’t, Will.... There’s one thing we can do. There’s the string of pearls. We can always fall back on it. You can take the team and make the drive.... You can do it in three days,....and I’ll look after things here. When Mother gave the pearls to me, she said ‘You’ll ne’er starve with them’....and we won’t, Will. We’ll sell them for the children’s sake.”

Will threw her hands away from his hair roughly and stood up. “Hell...no!” He yelled it at her. “I’ve taken your music away from you and your painting and your teaching and some of your health. But, by God,...I won’t take your mother’s present to you.”

He slammed the rough soddie door and went out to the barn.

By the next night the stalks of field corn were skeletons, a few delicate veins of leaves left, like so many white bones bleaching on the desert of the fields. At the end of three days the oat field was stripped almost as bare as the day the plow had finished its work. The young orchard was a graveyard of hopes. Some of the small grain previously harvested had been saved, and luckily, one digging of early potatoes was in the hole in the ground in which Will always kept them.

But everything else went through the crunching incisors of the horde. It was as though the little grayish-green fiends became a composite whole,—one colossal insect into whose grinding maw went all the green of the fields and the gardens, all the leaves and tender twigs of the young fruit trees, all the dreams and the hopes of the settlers.

The pests were everywhere. With nightmarish persistence, they appeared in everything. As tightly as Will kept the well covered, he drew them up in the bucket, so that he began

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5 Vibrations: quick movements back and forth
6 Cessation: ending
7 Incisors: front teeth that are particularly good for cutting
8 Fiends: evil spirits
9 Maw: the jaws of an animal that has a huge appetite
going back to the old spring for water. Abbie caught them eating the curtains of the little half-windows and sent them to a fiery death. She was forced to dry the weekly wash around the cook stove, her one attempt to hang it in the sun ending speedily with a dozen perforations in the first billowing garment.

The garden was a total loss. They had tried to save some of the beans by putting gunny-sacks over them and weighting them down with stones from the creek bed. The grasshoppers, after eating the beans, had begun on the gunny-sacks. "Will they eat the stones, too, Mother?" Mack wanted to know. And they could not laugh at him.

Abbie wrote a letter to her sister Mary, telling of this last hard piece of luck. Even letters were expensive luxuries so that one was made to do for the entire group of relatives back in eastern Iowa. She gave the letter to Will, who said that he would ride over to the little post office in the Lutz store as soon as he had finished caring for the stock. In an hour Will came in holding the letter by a corner. The edges of the envelope had been eaten all the way around with little neat flutings so that the two sides fell apart and the letter fluttered to the floor. The pocket of his old denim coat, where the letter had lain, was flapping down, cut on two sides by the same diabolical jaws.

What could you do? You could not fight them. You could not kill them. They were an army with an uncanny and unnatural power. Abbie looked out upon the devastation of the fields and the garden upon which they both had worked so hard. The hot wind blew over the ruins with Mephistophelean laughter. She looked up at the cloudless blue,—huge cruel, sardonic.

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10 gunny-sacks: a bag made from coarse heavy material, such as burlap
11 devastation: destruction
12 Mephistophelean: like the proud fallen angel Mephistopheles who is cold-hearted, funny, and sardonic
13 sardonic: making fun in a way that shows someone or something is not important

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1. What was Abbie doing when the selection started? What was Will doing?
2. How did Abbie and Will try to save the beans? What happened next?
3. Analyze In foreshadowing a writer gives clues to prepare readers for what will happen. What did the author foreshadow in this selection? How did she do it? CA 8RL3.6
4. Explain What are the literal and figurative meanings of the following sentence? "The young orchard was a graveyard of hopes." CA 8RW1.1
5. Read to Write In 500 to 700 words, write a story or describe an incident in your life. Base the narrative on an event related to your local weather, such as a hurricane or blizzard. As an alternative, you may use an environmental issue, such as water pollution or an endangered species. What was life like before and during this incident? Why was the event important? What was your attitude about it? Be sure to include dialogue in the narrative. CA 8WA2.1a,b,c
Do you want to learn more about life and inventions in the years between the Civil War and 1914? You might be interested in the following books.

**Nonfiction**

*Native Americans and the Reservation in American History* by Anita Louise McCormick recounts the history of relations between whites and Native Americans, beginning in the 1600s. McCormick also explains the historical and cultural beliefs that led members of each ethnic group to act as they did. *The content of this book is related to History–Social Science Standard US8.12.*

**Biography**

*The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane* by Russell Freedman does more than simply describe the brothers’ experiments. Freedman has included portions of their journals and letters, plus photos that the brothers took as they documented their experiments. *The content of this book is related to History–Social Science Standard US8.12.*

**Historical Fiction**

*Dreams in the Golden Country: The Diary of Zipporah Feldman, a Jewish Immigrant Girl* by Kathryn Lasky begins by describing the Feldmans’ experience on Ellis Island. As the diary continues, Zipporah tells about their life in New York City in the early 1900s and her hopes for the future. *The content of this book is related to History–Social Science Standard US8.12.*

**Nonfiction**

*McGuffey’s Fourth Eclectic Reader* by William McGuffey starts with directions to the teacher, followed by poetry and prose reading selections for students. This book gives the reader an interesting insight into what students read in the 1800s and why particular pieces were chosen. *The content of this book is related to History–Social Science Standard US8.12.*
Looking Back, Looking Ahead
You learned that following the Civil War, many whites moved to the Great Plains and the American West to mine, ranch, and farm. Many Native American groups, however, already lived in those areas, and the two peoples came into conflict.

Focusing on the Main Ideas
- The Native Americans of the Great Plains lived a nomadic lifestyle while following the great herds of buffalo. (page 686)
- During the late 1800s, whites and Native Americans fought while Native Americans tried to preserve their civilizations. (page 687)

Locating Places
Oklahoma
Dakota Territory
Black Hills
Little Bighorn River
Wounded Knee

Meeting People
Red Cloud
William Cody
Crazy Horse
Black Kettle
 Sitting Bull
George Custer
Geronimo (juh • RAH • nuh • MOH)
Helen Hunt Jackson

Content Vocabulary
nomadic (noh • MA • dihk)
reservation

Academic Vocabulary
despite (di • SPYT)
achieve

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

Western Settlement

History Social Science Standards
US8.12 Students analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution.
Following the Buffalo

Main Idea  The Native Americans of the Great Plains lived a nomadic lifestyle while following the great herds of buffalo.

Reading Connection  What might it be like to move from place to place throughout the year, following a large herd of animals so that your people could hunt and eat? Read to find out about the lifestyle of the Native Americans of the Great Plains.

In the mid-1850s, miners, railroads, cattle drivers, and farmers came to the Plains. Each new group threatened Native American culture. The Sioux chief Red Cloud lamented, “The white children [settlers] have surrounded me and left me nothing but an island.”

For centuries the Great Plains was home to many Native American nations. The Omaha and the Osage nations lived in communities as farmers and hunters. The Sioux, the Comanche, and the Blackfeet lived a nomadic (noh•MA•dihk) life. They traveled vast distances following their main source of food—the great herds of buffalo that roamed the Great Plains.

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

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

Threats to the Buffalo  At one time, the Plains Indians had millions of buffalo to supply their needs. After the Civil War, though, American hunters hired by the railroads began slaughtering the animals to feed the crews building the railroad. The railroad companies also wanted to prevent huge herds of buffalo from blocking the trains. William Cody, hired by the Kansas Pacific Railroad, once claimed that he had killed more than 4,000 buffalo in less than 18 months. He became known as Buffalo Bill. Starting in 1872, hunters targeted buffalo to sell the hides to the East, where tanneries made them into leather goods.

Native American Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Paul Stuart, Nations Within a Nation.

Reading Check  Describe  What is a nomadic way of life?
Conflict

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

Reading Connection How would you react if the government suddenly forced you to move from your home? Read to find out how Native Americans reacted when settlers moved into their lands and attempted to change the way they lived.

As ranchers, miners, and farmers moved onto the Plains, they deprived Native Americans of their hunting grounds, broke treaties guaranteeing certain lands to the Plains Indians, and often forced them to relocate to new territory. Native Americans resisted by attacking wagon trains, stagecoaches, and ranches. Occasionally, an entire group would go to war against nearby settlers and troops. In the late 1860s, the government pursued a new Indian policy to deal with these challenges.

Reservation Policy In 1867 the federal government appointed the Indian Peace Commission to set policies for Native Americans. The commission recommended moving the Native Americans to a few large reservations—tracts of land set aside for them.

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

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

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

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

Conflict on the Plains During the 1860s, many armed clashes between Native Americans and whites took place. Minnesota Territory was the site of one especially bloody confrontation. Resentful of the settlers, Sioux warriors, led by Red Cloud, burned and looted white settlers’ homes in the summer of 1862. Hundreds died before troops arrived from St. Paul and ended the uprising.

Following the Minnesota uprising, the army sent patrols far out onto the northern Great Plains. This action brought troops into contact with another branch of the Sioux—the nomadic Lakota. The Lakota fought hard to keep control of their hunting grounds, which extended from the Black Hills and the surrounding Badlands—rocky and barren terrain in the western parts of the Dakotas and northwestern Nebraska—westward to the Bighorn Mountains.
The Sioux, along with Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors, staged a series of attacks from 1865 to 1867. The bloodiest incident occurred on December 21, 1866. Army troops, led by Captain William J. Fetterman, were manning a fort on the Bozeman Trail, used by prospectors to reach gold mines in Montana. A Sioux military leader, Crazy Horse, acted as a decoy and lured the troops into a deadly trap. He tricked the fort’s commander into sending a detachment of about 80 soldiers in pursuit. Hundreds of warriors were waiting in ambush and wiped out the entire detachment. This incident came to be known as the Fetterman Massacre.

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

Although several hundred Native Americans surrendered at the fort, many others did not. In November 1864, Chief Black Kettle brought several hundred Cheyenne to negotiate a peace deal. They camped at Sand Creek. Shortly after, Colonel John Chivington led the Colorado Volunteers on an attack on the unsuspecting Cheyenne. Fourteen volunteers and hundreds of Cheyenne died. Retaliation by the Cheyenne was swift, causing widespread uprisings before some of the Cheyenne and Arapaho leaders agreed to stop the fighting in October 1865.

What Occurred at Little Bighorn? Treaties were supposed to bring peace, but tensions remained and erupted in more fighting a few years later. This time the conflict arose over the Black Hills of the Dakotas. The government had promised that “No white person or persons shall be permitted to settle upon or occupy” or even “to pass through” these hills. However, the hills were rumored to contain gold. Prospectors swarmed into the area.

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

Sitting Bull gathered Sioux and Cheyenne warriors along the Little Bighorn River in present-day Montana. They were joined by Crazy Horse, another Sioux chief, and his forces. The United States Army was ordered to round up the warriors and move them to reservations. The Seventh Cavalry, led by Lieutenant Colonel George Custer, was ordered to scout the Native American encampment.

Custer wanted the glory of leading a major victory. He divided his regiment and attacked the Native Americans on June 25, 1876. He had seriously underestimated their strength, however. With about 250 soldiers, Custer faced a Sioux and Cheyenne force of thousands. Custer and his entire command lost their lives. News of the army’s defeat shocked the nation.
The Native American triumph at Little Bighorn was short-lived. The army soon crushed the uprising, sending most of the Native Americans to reservations. Sitting Bull and his followers fled north to Canada. By 1881, exhausted and starving, the Lakota and Cheyenne agreed to live on a reservation.

Who Were the Nez Perce? Farther west, members of the Nez Perce, led by Chief Joseph, refused to be moved to a smaller reservation in Idaho in 1877. When the army came to relocate them, they fled their homes and traveled more than 1,000 miles. After a remarkable flight to Canada, Chief Joseph realized that resistance was hopeless. Finally, in October 1877, Chief Joseph surrendered, and his followers were moved to reservations.

The Apache Wars Trouble also broke out in the Southwest. The Chiracahua Apache had been moved from their homeland in present-day New Mexico and Arizona to the San Carlos reservation in Arizona in the mid-1870s. Many Apache resented confinement to this reservation. The Apache leader, Geronimo (juh•RAH•nuh•MOH), escaped from San Carlos and fled to Mexico with a small band of followers. During the 1880s, he led raids against settlers and the army in Arizona. Army troops pursued Geronimo and his warriors. Several times Geronimo went back to the reservation only to leave again. Geronimo said, “Once I moved about like the wind. Now I surrender to you.” In 1886 the Apache leader finally gave up—the last Native American to surrender formally to the United States.

Using Geography Skills

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

1. **Location** In what state did the Battle of Little Bighorn take place?
2. **Analyze** Which Native American nations resettled in present-day Oklahoma?
Chief Joseph was born in 1840 as Hin ma to yah lat k’it, which means Thunder Emerging from the Mountains. He grew up in the Wallowa Valley, located in present-day Oregon. In 1860, when gold was found on Nez Perce land, white settlers flooded into the region. In 1877 the United States government demanded that the Nez Perce give up their lands and move onto a reservation in Idaho. Chief Joseph, hoping to avoid violence, prepared his people for the move. He learned, however, that several young braves had attacked a group of white settlers. Fearing revenge, Chief Joseph led his followers more than 1,000 miles across Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. For more than three months he managed to evade a U.S. force 10 times larger than his group. He made his way north toward Canada, hoping to escape the reach of the United States Army. Along the way, he won the admiration of many whites for his humane treatment of prisoners and for his concern for women, children, and the elderly.

In September 1877, the Nez Perce had reached the Bear Paw Mountains in Montana, just 40 miles from the Canadian border. As the Nez Perce rested before their move into Canada, a band of 400 soldiers surrounded the camp. After a fierce battle, Chief Joseph offered to surrender in return for safe passage to the reservation in Idaho. Chief Joseph’s words of surrender reflect the tragedy of his people:

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

The Nez Perce were taken not to Idaho, but to a swampy tract of land in Kansas. There, unused to the weather and the environment, many fell ill and died. Eventually, the Nez Perce were scattered among reservations in Oklahoma, Idaho, and Washington. Chief Joseph continued to plead with the government to allow his people to return to their land in the Wallowa Valley. His efforts failed, but he is remembered as a great warrior, as well as a man of peace.
A Changing Culture Many things contributed to changing the traditional way of life of Native Americans—the movement of whites onto their lands, the slaughter of the buffalo, United States Army attacks, and the reservation policy. More change came from well-meaning reformers who wanted to abolish reservations and absorb the Native Americans into white American culture.

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

“...where one opens the record of the history of the Indians; every page and every year has its dark stain. The story of one tribe is the story of all, varied only by differences of time and place.”

—Helen Hunt Jackson, A Century of Dishonor

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

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

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

Cultural Impact This plan failed to achieve its goals. Some Native Americans succeeded as farmers or ranchers, but many had little training or enthusiasm for either pursuit. Their land allotments were too small to be profitable. Some Native Americans had adapted to life on reservations and did not want to see it transformed into homesteads. In the end, the Dawes Act did not benefit Native American nations. The culture of the Plains Indians was doomed because it was dependent on buffalo. Once the buffalo were wiped out, Native Americans on the Plains had no means to sustain their way of life and little interest in adopting white American culture in place of their own.
**Reading Summary**

**Review the Main Ideas**

- For centuries, Native Americans lived on the Great Plains. Some were farmers and others were nomadic. The buffalo supplied most of their needs.

- As white settlers continued to migrate and settle the West, Native American civilization was continually threatened. Conflict between the whites and the Native Americans persisted through the late 1800s.

**What Did You Learn?**

1. Who were Geronimo and Chief Joseph?
2. What was the Ghost Dance?

**Critical Thinking**

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

4. **The Big Ideas**
   How did differences in social beliefs between the white settlers and the Native Americans lead to the conflict that occurred in the West?

5. **Analyze**
   What two aspects of Native American life was the Dawes Act supposed to eliminate?

6. **Sequence**
   Draw a time line that lists key developments between the U.S. government and Native American nations from 1860 to 1890.

7. **Creative Writing**
   From the point of view of a Native American, write a poem describing the Plains Indians’ lifestyle or a battle or event that occurred on the Plains.

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**What Was the Battle at Wounded Knee?**

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

This ritual celebrated a hoped-for day of reckoning when settlers would disappear, the buffalo would return, and Native Americans would reunite with their deceased ancestors. As the ritual spread, reservation officials became alarmed and decided to ban the dance. Believing that the Sioux chief, Sitting Bull, was the leader of the movement, police went to his camp to arrest him. During a scuffle, they shot and killed Sitting Bull.

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

Wounded Knee marked the end of armed conflict between whites and Native Americans. The Native Americans of the Plains had fought hundreds of battles from 1860 to 1890, but they could fight no more. They depended on the buffalo for food, clothing, fuel, and shelter. When the herds were wiped out, resistance became impossible. The Native Americans had lost their long struggle.

**What Was the Purpose of the Dawes Act?**

Describe What was the purpose of the Dawes Act?
Looking Back, Looking Ahead
You learned that new farming methods and the defeat of the Native Americans allowed settlers to farm the Great Plains. In time, farmers began to organize to solve problems, such as falling crop prices.

Focusing on the Main Ideas
• When crop prices fell in the late 1800s, farmers began to organize politically. (page 694)
• In the 1890s, a political party developed supporting the views of farmers and the common people. (page 695)

Locating Places
Omaha, Nebraska

Meeting People
James B. Weaver
Grover Cleveland
William Jennings Bryan
William McKinley

Content Vocabulary
National Grange
coo per a tive (koh • AH • puh • ruh • tiv)
Populist Party (pAH • pyuh • lihst)
free silver

Academic Vocabulary
d e cline
dyn a mic (dy • NA • mihk)

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

Farmers’ problems

History
Social Science Standards
US8.12 Students analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution.
Identify the characteristics and impact of Grangerism and Populism.

The Farmers Organize

Main Idea When crop prices fell in the late 1800s, farmers began to organize politically.

Reading Connection Have you heard the expression “strength in numbers”? Read to find out how farmers organized in groups in the late 1800s to help solve the challenges they faced.

Crop Prices Fall

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

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

—from “The Farmer Is the Man”

What Did the Grange Do? Farmers began to organize in an effort to solve their problems. Within a short time, they created a mass political movement. The first farmers’ organization of this period was a network of local organizations that came to be called the National Grange. The Grange offered farmers education, fellowship, and support.

Above all, the Grange tried to encourage economic self-sufficiency. It set up “cash-only” cooperatives (koh•AH•puh•ruh•tivz), stores where farmers bought products from each other. The cooperatives charged lower prices than regular stores and provided an outlet for farmers’ crops. The purpose of the “cash-only” policy was to remove the burden of credit buying that threatened farmers.
In the 1870s, the Grange tried to cut farmers’ costs by asking state legislatures to place a limit on railroad shipping rates. Many Midwestern states did pass such laws. By 1878, however, the railroads had put so much pressure on state legislatures that these states repealed the rate regulations.

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

What Were Farmers’ Alliances? The Farmers’ Alliances were networks of organizations that sprang up in the West and the South in the 1880s. Alliance leaders extended the movement to other states. By 1890 the Southern Alliance had more than 3 million members, and the Colored Farmers’ National Alliance, a separate organization of African American farmers, had 1 million members.

Like the Grange, the Farmers’ Alliances sponsored education and cooperative buying and selling. The Alliances also proposed a plan in which the federal government would store farmers’ crops in warehouses and lend money to the farmers. When the stored crops were sold, the farmers would pay back the loans. Such a plan would reduce the power that railroads, banks, and merchants had over farmers and would offer farmers some federal protection. Regional differences and personality clashes impacted the effectiveness of the Alliances, even as they moved into politics.

In 1890 members of the Farmers’ Alliance identified candidates who supported the cause of the farmer. That year, four governors in the South were elected after promising to support the Alliance program. Several Southern legislatures now had pro-Alliance majorities, and more than 40 Democrats who supported the Alliance program were elected to Congress. Alliance candidates in the West did equally well.

The Populist Party Pleased with such successes, Alliance leaders worked to turn the movement into a national political party. In February 1890, Alliance members formed the People’s Party of the U.S.A., also known as the Populist Party (PAH•pyuh•lihst). The goals of this new party were rooted in populism, or appeal to the common people. In the 1890s, a political party developed supporting the views of farmers and the common people.

Reading Connection What beliefs and ideas do you think a political party today would have to support in order to be considered a party of the common people? Read to find out about the beginnings of the People’s, or Populist, Party in the late 1800s.

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

The Populist Party supported a number of political and labor reforms. The party wanted election reforms such as limiting the president and vice president to a single term, electing senators directly, and introducing the use of secret ballots. The Populist Party also called for shorter hours for workers and the creation of a national income tax.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**The Election of 1896** President Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, opposed free silver. At their 1896 convention, however, the Democrats chose a candidate for president who supported free silver and other Populist goals.

The Democratic Party’s candidate was 36-year-old William Jennings Bryan, known as the Great Commoner because of his appeal to average Americans. Bryan passionately believed in the farmers’ causes.
The Populists decided to endorse Bryan as their candidate for president and to nominate their own candidate, Tom Watson of Georgia, for vice president. The Republicans nominated William McKinley of Ohio for president. A former representative and governor of Ohio, McKinley was a shrewd politician who opposed free silver.

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

Bryan’s strenuous campaigning did not produce an election victory. By the time of the election, an economic depression was nearly over, and voters believed that good times were returning. They put their trust in the Republican candidate McKinley, who represented stability. Even the economic situation of the farmers was improving. The Populists’ message no longer seemed urgent. McKinley won 271 electoral votes to Bryan’s 176. McKinley received 7.1 million popular votes to 6.5 million for Bryan.

The Populist ticket did poorly, receiving only 222,600 popular votes and no electoral votes.

**The Populist Legacy** The Populist Party had an impact on politics and government far beyond its showing in national elections. Minor parties have often promoted reform by taking clear-cut stands on controversial issues and proposing bold and original solutions. Reformers adopted many Populist ideas and succeeded in getting many new laws passed. Among the Populist proposals that were adopted and are still in place today are the federal income tax (Sixteenth Amendment, 1913), direct election of U.S. senators (Seventeenth Amendment, 1913), the secret ballot (late 1890s), and primary elections (Wisconsin, 1903). In the 1900s, the United States adopted an eight-hour workday.

**Reading Check** Examine Why did the Republican candidate win the presidential election of 1896?
On the Cattle Trail

Cowboy Andy Adams describes the start of his first cattle drive and the instructions given by the trail boss.

Flood seldom gave orders; but, as a number of us had never worked on the trail before, at breakfast on the morning of our start he gave in substance these general directions:

“Boys, the secret of trailing cattle is never to let your herd know that they are under restraint. Let everything that is done be done voluntarily by the cattle. From the moment you let them off the bed ground in the morning until they are bedded at night, never let a cow take a step, except in the direction of its destination.

In this manner you can loaf away the day, and cover from fifteen to twenty miles, and the herd in the meantime will enjoy all the freedom of an open range. Of course, it’s long, tiresome hours to the men; but the condition of the herd and saddle stock demands sacrifices on our part, if any have to be made. And I want to caution you younger boys about your horses... Accidents will happen to horses, but don’t let it be your fault; keep your saddle blankets dry and clean, for no better word can be spoken of a man than that he is careful with his horses... we have not a horse to spare, and a man afoot is useless.”

—from Trail Drive: A True Narrative of Cowboy Life from Andy Adams’ Log of a Cowboy
Winter in Dakota Territory

Settlers endured challenging living conditions. Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote of her family’s experiences during the bitter winter of 1880–81.

Ma said “. . . We must get out the washing while the weather’s clear so we can.”

All that day Laura and Carrie and Mary looked forward to the magazine Youth’s Companions and often they spoke of them. But the bright day was short. They stirred and punched the clothes boiling on the stove; they lifted them on the broom handle into the tub where Ma soaped them and rubbed them. Laura rinsed them, Carrie stirred the blueing bag in the second rinse-water until it was blue enough. Laura made the boiled starch. And when for the last time Ma went out into the cold to hang the freezing wash on the line, Pa had come for dinner.

Then they washed the dishes, they scrubbed the floor and blacked the stove, and washed the inside of the windowpanes. Ma brought in the frozen-dry clothes and they sorted them and sprinkled them and rolled them tightly, ready for ironing. Twilight had come. It was too late to read that day and after supper there was no lamplight because they must save the last of the kerosene.

―from The Long Winter

Indian School

In attempts to “civilize” Native American children, Indian schools were created in several parts of the country. In this passage, Ah-nen-la-de-ni of the Mohawk people describes his first experience in such a school.

After the almost complete freedom of reservation life the cramped quarters and the dull routine of the school were maddening to all us strangers. There were endless rules for us to study and abide by, and hardest of all was the rule against speaking to each other in our own language. We must speak English or remain silent, and those who knew no English were forced to be dumb or else break the rules in secret. This last we did quite frequently, and were punished, when detected, by being made to stand in the “public hall” for a long time or to march about the yard while the other boys were at play.

―from Witnessing America

On the Cattle Trail

1. What seems to be the cowhand’s biggest secret?
2. According to the foreman, what is worth the sacrifice of the cowboys’ comfort?

Winter in Dakota Territory

3. How many steps were involved in washing the clothes for Laura’s family?
4. What activity did Laura and her sisters look forward to doing once their chores were done?

5. How does Ah-nen-la-de-ni describe school?
6. What is the hardest rule for the children to follow?

Read to Write

7. Reread the documents to find evidence that shows how each author needed to adapt to a new environment or circumstance. What adjustments did they make? Do they explain why? Write an essay explaining your conclusions. [CA 8WA1]
Review Content Vocabulary
On a sheet of paper, create a crossword puzzle using the following terms. Use the terms’ definitions as your crossword clues.

1. reservations  
2. cooperatives  
3. vigilantes  
4. vaqueros  
5. lodes  
6. stampedes

Review the Main Ideas
Section 1 • The Mining Booms
7. What was the Comstock Lode?
8. In what ways did the railroads boost the American economy?

Section 2 • Ranchers and Farmers
9. What is a vaquero?
10. What attracted farmers to the Great Plains?

Section 3 • Native American Struggles
11. What actions by whites destroyed the buffalo population?
12. In what present-day state was the Indian Territory located?

Section 4 • Farmers in Protest
13. How did the Grange help farmers?
14. What political reforms did the Populists support?

Critical Thinking
15. Analyze How did the rush to find gold and silver spark the creation of new communities in the West?  

16. Economics Link Why was the Cattle Kingdom dependent on the railroads?  

17. Cause and Effect Describe the problems that led farmers to organize granges and alliances.  

Geography Skills
Study the map below and answer the following questions.

18. Location In what part of Texas were most of the large cattle ranches located?  

19. Movement To which railroad towns did the Goodnight-Loving Trail run?  

20. Movement Which cattle trails ran though Indian Territory?
Read to Write

21. **Analyze** Briefly discuss the geographic challenges faced by settlers and Native Americans in the American West and Great Plains. How did they overcome the challenges?  

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

23. **Using Your Foldables** Choose one of the four groups of people you learned about in this chapter. Describe that groups’ triumphs and tragedies in a newspaper article you could have written in the late 1800s.

Using Academic Vocabulary

24. Read the following sentences and write the meaning of the underlined academic vocabulary word.

> Power in a republic is derived from the people.

> New machinery was developed to extract ore from the earth’s crust.

Economics Connection

25. **Researching** Research to find information about a Native American reservation in the United States today. Write a report describing one of the major businesses on that reservation.

Reviewing Skills

26. **Visualizing** If you lived on the frontier in the late 1800s, would you have been a miner, a rancher, a Native American, or a farmer? Select one and write an essay describing a day in your life. Use clear descriptive language so that your readers have a good visual sense of what your life was like.

27. **Composing** Reread the quote from the farmer’s song on page 694. Write a song or poem that a banker or merchant might write.

Read the passage below and answer the following question.

Having behind us the producing masses of this nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring interests and the toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.


28. By speaking against the gold standard, Bryan was showing his support for the Populist goal of

A. an eight-hour workday.
B. a currency system based on free silver.
C. farmers’ cooperatives.
D. an income tax.

29. When Bryan refers to “the producing masses of this nation,” he most likely is including

A. farmers.
B. political leaders.
C. manufacturers.
D. Republicans.