

Opening the West

Lesson 1 Mining and Railroads in the West

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why do people make economic choices?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How did mining lead to the creation of new states?
2. How did the railroads help the mining industry grow in the West?

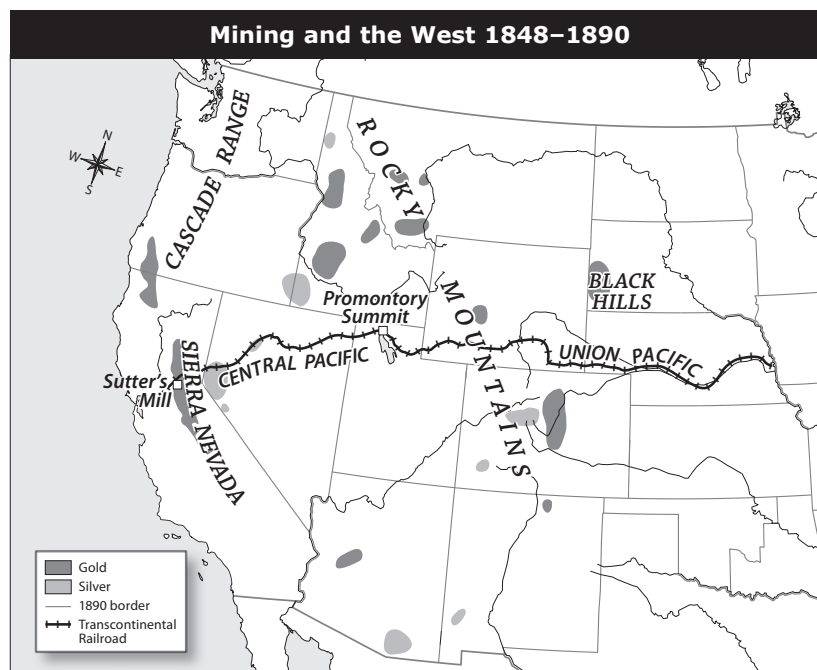
Terms to Know

subsidy money or goods given by a person or government to support a project that benefits the public

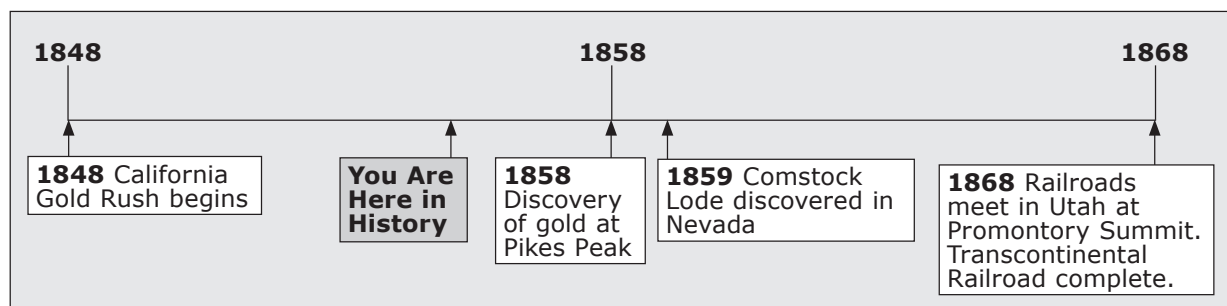
transcontinental going across a continent

time zone a geographic region in which the same standard time is used

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



Opening the West

Lesson 1 Mining and Railroads in the West, *Continued*

Gold, Silver, and Boomtowns

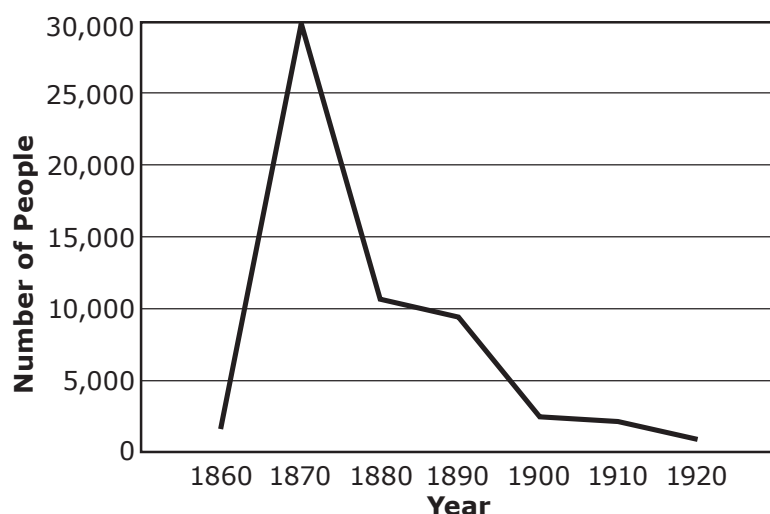
In 1849, people rushed to California to find gold. By the mid-1850s, the California Gold Rush was over. But miners still wanted to "strike it rich." They began looking for gold in other parts of the West. In 1858, they found it at Pikes Peak in the Colorado Rockies. By early 1859, about 50,000 miners had moved into Colorado's gold fields.

Some gold was found in streams, but most gold was deep underground. Mining companies came. They had machinery and many workers. They were more likely to find a lot of gold than a single miner was.

In 1859, miners found one of the world's richest deposits of silver ore in Nevada. It was called the Comstock Lode. It was named after Henry Comstock. He owned part of the land it was on. A lode is a section of earth where much of a precious mineral is found. Thousands of silver mines opened in the area, but few were successful.

Boomtowns grew up very fast in places near where gold and silver were found. People got money quickly in boomtowns, but they also spent or lost it quickly. Few boomtowns had police or jails. Ordinary citizens chased and punished criminals. Most people in boomtowns were men. Women who were there ran businesses, taught school, cooked, or did other work. Boomtowns lasted only as long as gold or silver was there. When the ore was gone, people left. This created "ghost towns."

Population of a Boomtown (Virginia City, Nevada)



Reading Check

1. Why did many boomtowns turn into ghost towns?

Critical Thinking

2. Why were mining companies more successful than individual miners?

Reading Graphs

3. According to the graph, when do you think the most successful mining took place in this boomtown?

Opening the West**Lesson 1** Mining and Railroads in the West, *Continued***Defining**

4. What are *subsidies*?

**Identifying**

5. At what place were the two sets of tracks joined to create the transcontinental railroad?

**Describing**

6. Use a two-tab Foldable and cut the tabs in half to make four-tabs. Place it along the dotted line over the text that begins with "In time, people saw the need..." Write *Transcontinental Railroad* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. As you read, respond to the questions about the railroad.

Soon there was less and less gold and silver, so miners dug for other metals. They dug for copper, lead, and zinc. People moved near the new mines. Thousands of settlers moved west. Besides mining, they farmed and started ranches. They opened businesses. By 1890, there were seven new states: Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho.

Railroads Connect East and West

Mining communities needed transportation. Gold and silver had little value unless it could reach markets. People in boomtowns also needed supplies. Stagecoaches and wagons were not fast enough. To meet people's needs, many railroads were built between 1865 and 1890.

Railroads were so important to the nation that the federal government gave **subsidies**, or gifts of money or land, to the railroad companies. The government gave more than 130 million acres of land to railroad companies. The government got much of this land by buying it from or making treaties with Native Americans. States and towns also gave subsidies to have railroads built in their areas.

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In time, people saw the need for a **transcontinental** railroad. It would cross the country. It would connect the Atlantic coast and the Pacific coast. Southerners wanted the route of the transcontinental railroad to go through the South. Northerners wanted the route to go through the North. During the Civil War, the government chose a northern route.

The challenge of building a transcontinental railroad was to lay more than 1,700 miles of track. Tracks crossed plains, rivers, and mountains.

Two companies built the railroad. The Central Pacific Company worked eastward from California. The Union Pacific Company worked westward from Nebraska. (Railroad tracks already ran as far west as Nebraska.) Both companies worked as fast as they could. They hired thousands of workers. The Union Pacific Railroad hired Irish and African American workers. The Central Pacific Railroad hired Chinese immigrants.

On May 10, 1869, the two sets of tracks met at Promontory Summit in Utah Territory. Leland Stanford, California's governor, drove the final spike to finish the railroad. Then, the message was sent by telegraph:

Opening the West**Lesson 1** Mining and Railroads in the West, *Continued*

"The last rail is laid! The last spike driven! The Pacific Railroad is completed!"

Railroads had a big effect on the economy. They carried workers and goods to the West. Trains carried metals and other supplies to factories back East. Because train tracks are made of steel, the steel industry grew quickly. The new railroads helped many other industries grow as well. The coal industry, companies that made railroad cars, and construction companies got much business because of the railroads.

People built new towns along the railroads. Ranchers and farmers moved into the area. Trains had helped to build small towns into cities. Denver, Colorado, is one example.

Trains even changed how we measure time. Before the railroad, each area kept time based on where the sun was in the sky at noon. For example, clocks in Boston told time 11 minutes later than clocks in New York City. But differences in timekeeping made problems for trains. There could be mistakes in planning. There could even be train crashes.

The American Railway Association came up with a system. In 1883, they divided the country into four **time zones**. All towns in one time zone had the same time. The next zone was exactly an hour different. That made train travel safer and more reliable. Trains also helped to connect Americans in different regions. Trains were changing the way Americans lived.

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Check for Understanding

Name two places where gold and silver were discovered in the West.

How did railroads change life in America?

**Reading Check**

7. How did railroads affect America's economy in the 1800s?

**Defining**

8. What is a *time zone*?



9. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write the title *Changes in the West* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs *Mines* and *Trains*. On both, write two sentences telling what you found most interesting about how mines and railroads changed the West. Use your Foldable to help answer Check for Understanding.

Opening the West

Lesson 2 Ranchers and Farmers

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does geography influence the way people live?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did ranchers get their cattle to market in the North and East?*
2. *What brought more settlers to the Great Plains?*

Terms to Know

long drive a trip of several hundred miles on which ranchers led their cattle to railroads and distant markets

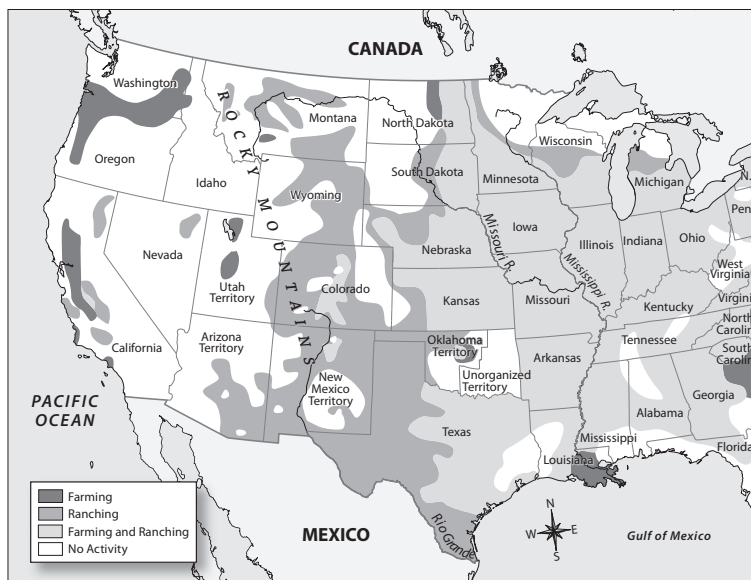
vaquero a cowboy, particularly a Mexican cowboy

homestead to earn ownership of land by living on it

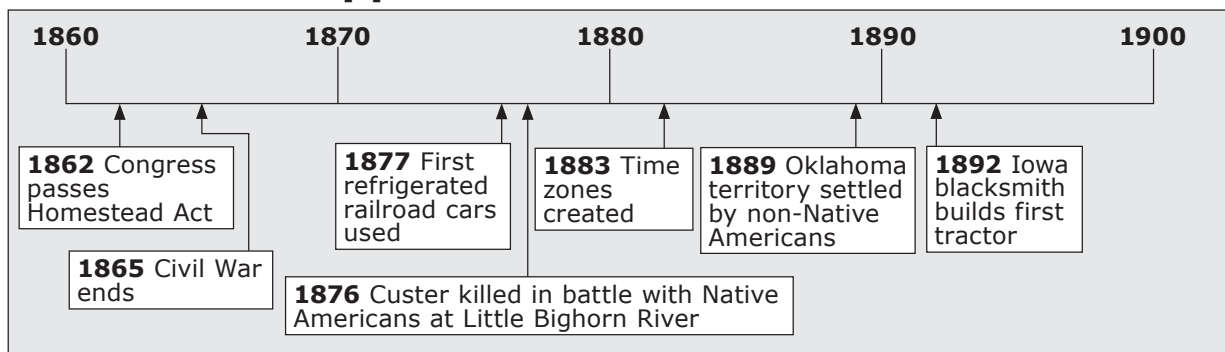
sodbuster name given to Great Plains farmers

dry farming a farming method that depends on plowing after every rain to trap moisture in the soil

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



Opening the West

Lesson 2 Ranchers and Farmers, *Continued*

Cattle on the Plains

In the 1500s, Spanish explorers first came to Texas. They brought cattle for food. Some of the cattle escaped. Over time, the cattle developed into a new breed called longhorns.

Much of Texas was open land. It was not fenced, so cattle roamed free. In the 1800s, there were thousands of cattle. Settlers in Texas rounded them up and started ranches.

There were fast-growing markets for beef in the North and the East. The value of cattle was about \$3 to \$4 each in Texas. In the North and East, cattle sold for \$40 each.

Ranchers needed a way to get their cattle to those markets. By 1865, the Missouri Pacific Railroad reached Kansas City, Missouri. Later, the railroads reached Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming. Texas ranchers began to herd cattle to railroad towns. From there, cattle were shipped to the North and East.

Sometimes cattle were herded hundreds of miles to the closest railroad. The trip, called the **long drive**, was worth the time and cost. The cattle drives started in spring so cattle would have food to eat on the way. The Chisholm Trail was one well-known path that ranchers followed to get to Kansas.

Herding cattle, or cattle driving, was a hard job for many reasons:

- The long drive took two or three months.
- Cowhands faced many dangers, such as violent storms and "rustlers" who tried to steal cattle.
- They had to control the herd if a stampede started.

Many cowhands had fought in the Civil War. Many were African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics. Hispanic ranch hands in the Spanish Southwest were known as **vaqueros**. They developed the riding, roping, and branding skills that cowhands used. They also added Spanish words to the language. For example, the word *ranch* is from the Mexican word *rancho*.

From the late 1860s to the mid-1880s, long drives had moved 5 million cattle. Ranchers became rich when cattle prices were high. Then, the market collapsed. There were several reasons. Ranchers had increased the size of herds. Prices fell. Ranchers lost much of the free grazing land because people put fences on their property. When there



Reading Check

1. How did railroads increase the value of Texas cattle?



Explaining

2. Why was the life of a cowhand hard?



Identifying

3. Who developed the special skills used by cowhands?

Opening the West

Lesson 2 Ranchers and Farmers, *Continued*



Explaining

4. Why did people who first saw the Plains think it was not good for farming?



Mark the Text

5. Underline the words that tell what a settler did to earn free land under the Homestead Act.

were too many cattle for sale, the price of beef went down. The cattle industry continued, but it was changed forever.

Farmers Settle the Plains

The people who first came to the Great Plains did not think it was good farmland. The Great Plains were known as the "Great American Desert." The land was dry and had few trees. Even so, farmers began to settle there in the late 1860s.

There were several reasons. Lots of rain, free land, and easy travel on the railroads encouraged people to move west to farm the land in the 1860s and 1870s.

Congress passed the Homestead Act in 1862. To **homestead** means to earn ownership of land by settling on it. The Homestead Act helped people to settle the Great Plains. The act gave free land to anyone who paid a \$10 fee and lived on the land for five years. A settler could get up to 160 acres (65 hectares) of land.

Thousands of new settlers moved to the Great Plains. They included immigrants and African Americans who no longer felt safe in the South.

Some of the settlers were women. A married woman could not claim land. A single woman or a widow could claim land through the Homestead Act. In Colorado and Wyoming, 12 percent of the homesteaders were women.

Immigrants could file homestead claims. Thousands of people from a part of Europe called Scandinavia settled on the Great Plains.

Some settlers bought their land. The railroad companies advertised the Great Plains as a great place to live. So did steamship companies, land sellers, and western states and territories. People were eager to get cheap land, independence, and easy profits. They moved west.

However, life on the Great Plains was not easy at all. Farming in the Great Plains was hard. There were few trees, so farmers built houses of sod—packed soil held together by grass roots.

The climate was extreme. Some years there was too much rain. This brought floods to the Great Plains. Other years there was not enough rain. Then there would be droughts and brushfires.

Winter brought deep snow. This could trap people in their homes and bury the animals. Farm families planned ahead by storing food. The whole family worked on the

Opening the West**Lesson 2** Ranchers and Farmers, *Continued*

farm. Children often had so much farm work that they did not have time to go to school.

Farmers on the Great Plains were called **sodbusters**. They came up with new tools and new ways to farm the hard sod. One way was **dry farming**. With dry farming, farmers plowed the land every time it rained. This trapped water in the soil. Farmers also dug wells.

Sodbusters had to cut through tough layers of sod. They used steel plows to plow their fields. They planted a crop called winter wheat. This crop grows well in dry climates.

Even with these new methods, farmers often could not grow large enough crops. Many farmers lost their farms.

By the 1880s, only Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma had not been settled. The law said only Native Americans could live there. There was one part of Indian Territory that was not assigned to any of the Indian groups. The government agreed to let non-Native American homesteaders settle there.

On April 22, 1889, more than 10,000 people lined up at the edge of these lands. A signal was given. Homesteaders rushed into the land to claim a piece for themselves. They found that some people had gone over the line early. These people were called "sooners," and they got the best land.

By 1890, all of America was settled. Life in America had changed, especially for Native Americans.

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Check for Understanding

How did Texans earn a living from wild herds of cattle?

What role did railroads play in getting people to settle the Great Plains?

**Reading Check**

6. What new methods did farmers use on the Great Plains?



7. Place a three-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Label the tabs *Cattle*, *Cowboys*, and *Sodbusters*. Use both sides of the tabs to write three or more facts that you remember about the roles of each. Use your Foldable to help answer Check for Understanding.

Opening the West

Lesson 3 Native American Struggles

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why does conflict develop?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

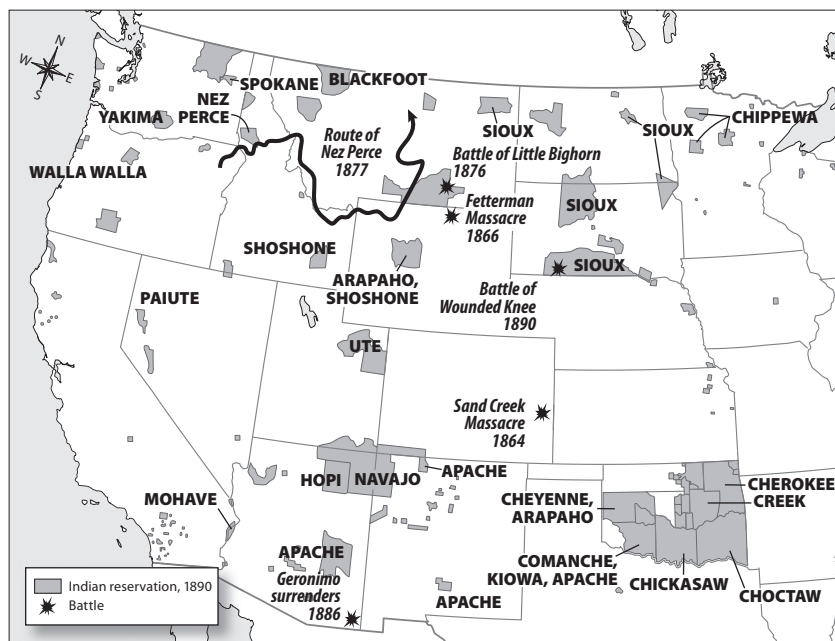
1. How did settlement on the Great Plains threaten Native Americans?
2. Why did conflict start between the Native Americans and the whites?

Terms to Know

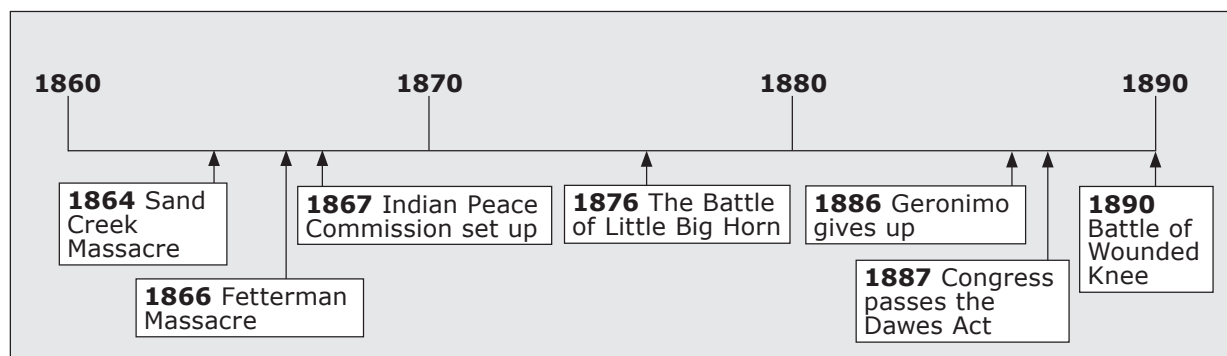
nomadic moving from place to place in a fixed pattern

reservation an area of land set aside for use by a group

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



Opening the West

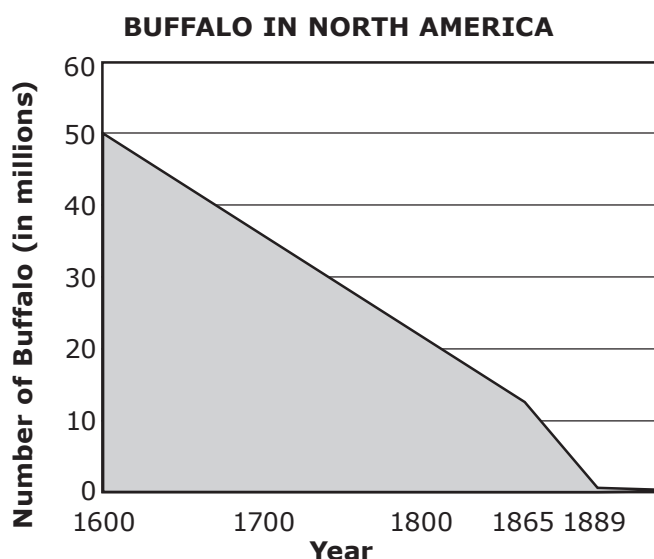
Lesson 3 Native American Struggles, *Continued*

First People of the Plains

In the mid-1850s miners, ranchers, and farmers began to settle on the Great Plains. The region had been home to Native American nations for hundreds of years.

Some Plains Indians lived in communities as farmers and hunters. Most Plains Indians were **nomadic**. They traveled from place to place. They always followed their main food source, the buffalo.

After the Civil War, American hunters began to kill large numbers of buffalo. Railroad companies did not want the buffalo to stand on the tracks and block trains. The companies also wanted the buffalo meat to feed workers who were building the railroads. Hunters killed even more buffalo to sell their hides in the East.



Groups of Native Americans living on the Plains were all different in some way. Yet, in many ways, they were also alike. The large Indian nations were divided into smaller groups, or bands. They also had a governing council to help make decisions for the group. Most members took part in making decisions.

The women raised the children, cooked, and did other chores. The men hunted, traded, and protected their band. Most Plains people had a belief in the spiritual power of nature.

Reading Check

1. Describe the way of life of Plains Indians.

Mark the Text

2. Underline the sentence that explains why most Plains Indians were nomadic.

Explaining

3. Why did railroad companies and hunters want to kill buffalo?

Reading Graphs

4. According to the graph, about how many buffalo were left in 1865?

Opening the West

Lesson 3 Native American Struggles, *Continued*



Mark the Text

5. Underline the sentence that tells what the Indian Peace Commission was set up to do.



Explaining

6. Why was the land on many reservations called "poor land"?
- _____
- _____



Explaining

7. Why did white settlers want the Native American land in the Black Hills?
- _____
- _____

Conflict on the Plains

As settlers took more and more land in the Plains, conflicts began. In 1867 the government set up the Indian Peace Commission. It would decide what to do about Native Americans who lived in the United States. The commission recommended that all Native Americans be moved to **reservations**. A reservation is land set aside for a group. The military had the power to move Native Americans by force. Congress set aside the largest reservations on the Great Plains. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was in charge of the reservations.

Often, Native Americans were tricked into moving to reservations. Native leaders wanted to be sure their people could farm and hunt. Many reservations were on poor land for farming or hunting. The government often did not deliver food or supplies. What they did send was of poor quality.

At first, many Native Americans agreed to move to reservations. When they saw the bad conditions, they wanted to leave. Some Native Americans refused to go.

There were fights. In 1862, Sioux fighters burned and looted the homes of white settlers. After that, the U.S. government forced most Sioux to move to reservations.

Miners were arriving in Colorado Territory to search for gold and silver. Cheyenne and Arapaho raided miners' and settlers' wagon trains. They killed 200 settlers. The governor told them to surrender. In November 1864, Cheyenne people went to make a peace treaty. The army attacked. This became known as the Sand Creek Massacre.

The Sioux continued to fight. They saw the U.S. Army building forts on a trail to Montana's gold mines. The trail led through Sioux lands. In December 1866, the Sioux trapped and killed 80 U.S. soldiers. This attack became known as the Fetterman Massacre.

A treaty in 1868 was supposed to bring peace with the Sioux. The Black Hills of the Dakotas had been set aside for Native Americans. White settlers moved in when they heard that the hills contained gold. Sitting Bull, a Lakota Sioux leader, refused to sell the land.

Lieutenant Colonel George Custer attacked the Sioux at Little Bighorn River. Custer and all his men were killed. News of the army's defeat shocked the nation. Before long, the army sent most Plains Indians to reservations.

Opening the West**Lesson 3** Native American Struggles, *Continued*

The Nez Perce lived in the Pacific Northwest. In the 1860s, gold was discovered on their land. The U.S. government ordered them to leave. Chief Joseph, their leader, left for Canada. The Nez Perce were caught by soldiers on the way. They were brought to a reservation. Chief Joseph spent the rest of his life trying to get better treatment for Native Americans.

The Chiricahua Apache were moved to a reservation in Arizona. Their leader, Geronimo, fled to Mexico. During the 1880s, he led raids in Arizona. In 1886 he surrendered.

Reservations, army attacks, and the killing of buffalo changed Native Americans' lives. Reformers also tried to change things. They wanted Native Americans to take on white culture. Congress passed the Dawes Act in 1887. It tried to break up reservations and tribal groups. Reformers hoped that Native Americans would become farmers. Some did, but many did not want to farm or to learn how.

In 1889, many Native Americans in the West began performing a ceremony called the Ghost Dance. It showed their hope that white settlers would go away, buffalo would return, and Native Americans would go back to their old way of life. In 1890 police killed Sitting Bull, whom the government thought had started the Ghost Dance. Hundreds of Lakota Sioux gathered at Wounded Knee, a creek in South Dakota. The army went there to take any Sioux weapons. A shot was fired. Then the army fired on the Sioux. More than 200 Sioux and 25 soldiers were killed. This event marked the end of armed conflict between the U.S. government and Native Americans.

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Check for Understanding

What was the main source of conflict between Native Americans and whites?

How did Native Americans react to being forced to live on reservations?

✓ Reading Check

8. How effective was the Dawes Act?

? Sequencing

9. Number these events in the order they happened.

- ___ Massacre at Wounded Knee
- ___ Geronimo escapes to Mexico
- ___ Sitting Bull is killed
- ___ The Dawes Act



10. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write the title *Conflicts on the Plains* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs *Causes* and *Effects*. List the facts that you remember about the conflicts between Native Americans and the settlers of the Plains. Use both sides of the tabs.

Opening the West

Lesson 4 Farmers—A New Political Force

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do governments change?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did the National Grange and the Farmers' Alliances try to help farmers?*
2. *What were the ideas of the Populist Party?*

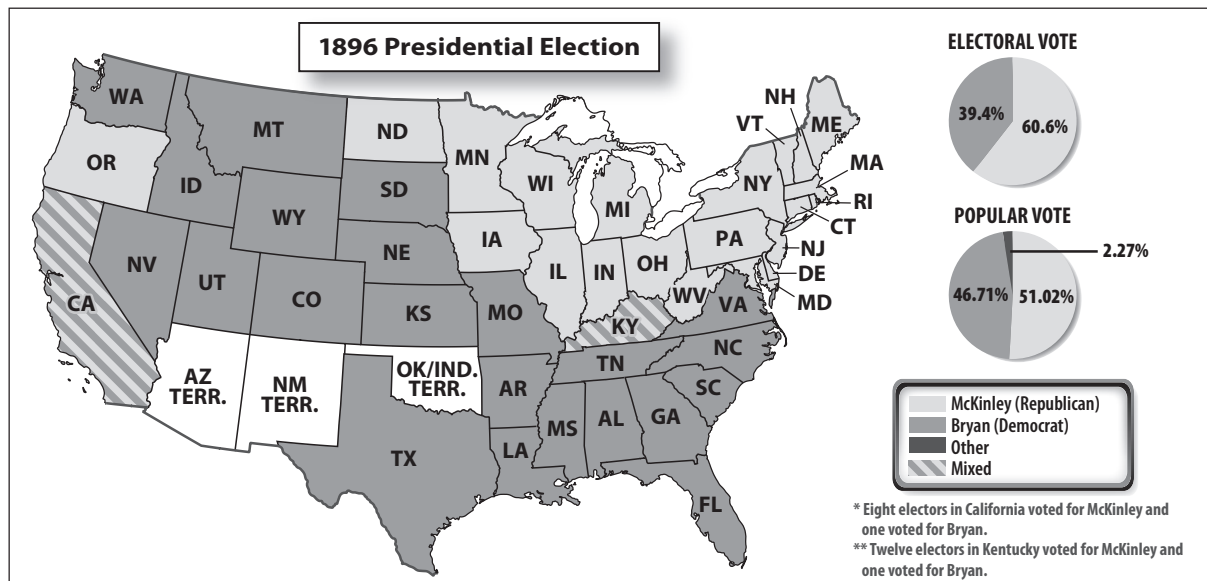
Terms to Know

National Grange network of local farmers' groups

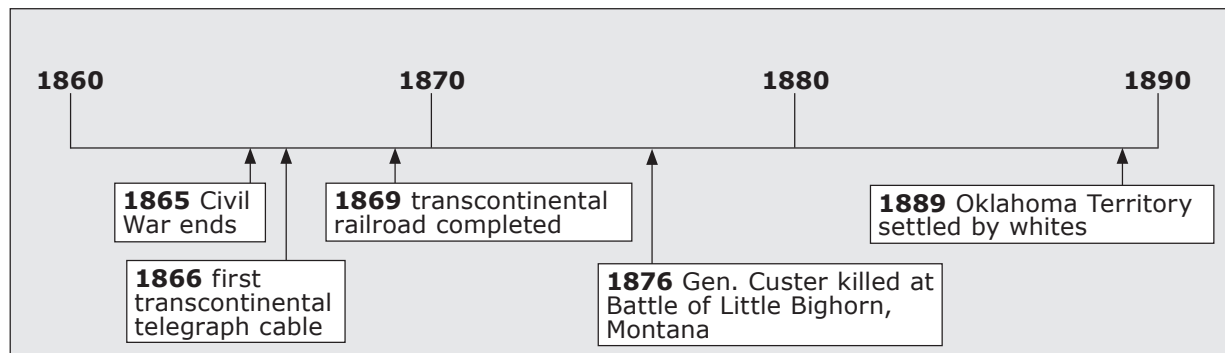
cooperative cash-only store where farmers bought from each other

populism an appeal to the common people

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



Opening the West

Lesson 4 Farmers—A New Political Force, *Continued*

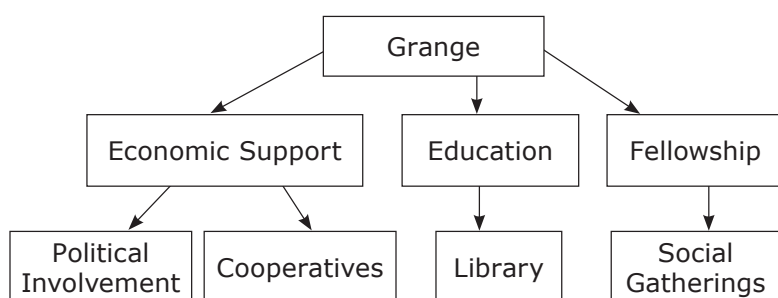
Farmers Unite

Farming expanded in the West and South after the Civil War. The supply of crops grew faster than the demand for them. Prices fell. However, farmers' expenses were still high.

Farmers blamed companies in the East that charged high prices. They blamed banks for charging high interest rates. Most of all they blamed the railroads for high shipping costs. Senator William A. Pepper of Kansas said that the railroad companies "took possession of the land" and the bankers "took possession of the farmer."

To solve their problems, farmers began to band together. They felt this would give them more power. Before long, they created a political movement. The first organization they set up was a network of groups. This became the **National Grange**.

The National Grange



The Grange was made up of local groups. It offered education, friendship, and support to farmers. It provided books about planting crops and raising farm animals.

In the 1870s, the nation's economy took a downturn. The Grange wanted to help farmers support themselves. One way it did this was to set up **cooperatives**. These were stores where farmers bought goods from each other. Cooperatives charged lower prices than regular stores charged. They were also a way for farmers to sell their crops. To keep farmers out of debt, cooperatives accepted cash only.

The Grange became active in politics. It asked states to limit railroad shipping rates. Many states in the Midwest passed these laws. By 1878, the railroads were pressuring the states. They repealed the laws. Farmers often had to borrow money until they sold their next crop. Cash-only

Reading Check

1. Why did farmers create organizations such as the Grange and the Farmers' Alliances?

Visualize It!

2. According to the chart, the Grange gave support in three areas: Economic Support, Fellowship, and

Mark the Text

3. Circle the word that names the special stores where farmers bought from one another.

Opening the West

Lesson 4 Farmers—A New Political Force, *Continued*

Identifying Causes

4. Why did the Grange's cooperatives fail?

Reading Check

5. Why did people support the Populist Party?

Mark the Text

6. Underline the sentence in the text that defines *free silver*.

Finding the Main Idea

7. Why did the Populists believe free silver would help farmers and debtors?

cooperatives could not survive when their customers had no cash.

The Farmers' Alliances were also set up to help farmers. This network was mostly in the West and the South. By 1890, the Southern Alliance had more than 3 million members.

There was a separate group called the Colored Farmers' National Alliance. This was a group of African American farmers. The group had one million members.

Like the Grange, the Farmers' Alliances supported cooperative buying and selling. They asked the government to store their crops in warehouses and lend them money. When prices rose the crops could be sold and the farmers would pay back the money. This would reduce the power that banks had over them. The alliances could have been a powerful force, but regional differences and personality differences got in the way of achieving this goal.

A Party of the People

In 1890 the Farmers' Alliances formed a political party. They called it the People's Party of the U.S.A. It was also known as the Populist Party. The candidates were elected governor in 6 states, won 3 seats in the U.S. Senate, and won 50 seats in the House of Representatives.

The party's goals were based on **populism**—an appeal to the common people. Populists wanted to replace the gold-based money system with one based on free silver. That does not mean that money is free. It just means there is an unlimited production of silver coins. Populists believed that with more silver coins in circulation, more farmers could pay their debts.

The Populist Party also:

- thought the government should own railroads and telegraph lines.
- wanted the president and vice president to serve only one term.
- wanted to elect senators directly.
- fought for shorter hours for workers.
- fought for a national income tax that would tax richer people at higher rates.

Farmers and people who owed money liked the idea of free silver. They hoped to pay their loans more cheaply. Silver-mining companies also liked the idea.

Opening the West**Lesson 4** Farmers—A New Political Force, *Continued*

In the 1896 election, Democrat William Jennings Bryan and Republican William McKinley ran for president. The Populist Party endorsed Bryan. He supported free silver and other Populist ideas. McKinley opposed free silver. By election time, the economy was improving and McKinley won by a landslide.

Still, the Populist Party made its mark. In the 1900s, the nation ended the gold standard. It also adopted an eight-hour workday, an income tax, and the direct election of senators.

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Check for Understanding

List two ways that the Grange and Farmers' Alliances helped farmers.

Which Populist Party ideas were eventually adopted by the government?



- 8.** Place a three-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write the title *Opening the West* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs *Grange*, *Farmers' Alliance*, and *Populist Party*. Write one or more sentences telling how each group affected farmers in the West and around the country. Use both sides of the tabs. Use your Foldable to help answer Check for Understanding.