



Core Knowledge® HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

# Native Americans and Westward Expansion: Cultures and Conflicts

Sitting Bull



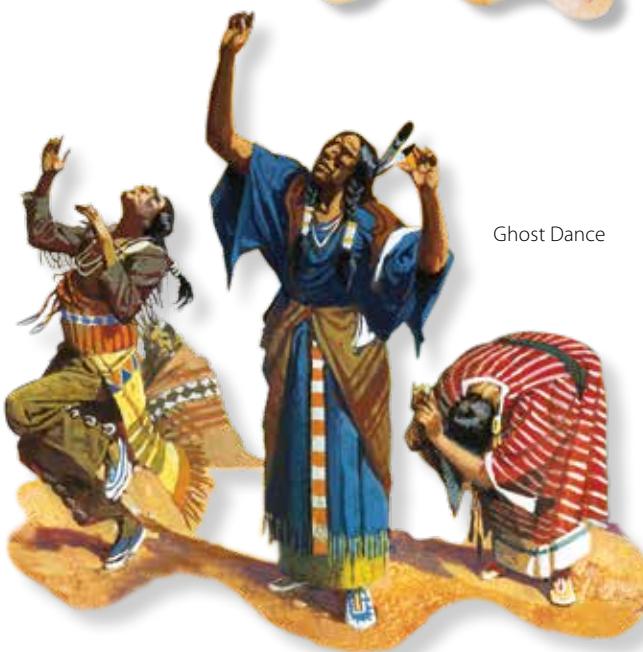
Reader

Cowboy



Transcontinental Railroad

Ghost Dance



## **THIS BOOK IS THE PROPERTY OF:**

**STATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROVINCE** \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNTY** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARISH** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL DISTRICT** \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER** \_\_\_\_\_

**Book No.** \_\_\_\_\_

Enter information  
in spaces  
to the left as  
instructed.

**PUPILS to whom this textbook is issued must not write on any page or mark any part of it in any way, consumable textbooks excepted.**

1. Teachers should see that the pupil's name is clearly written in ink in the spaces above in every book issued.
  2. The following terms should be used in recording the condition of the book:  
New; Good; Fair; Poor; Bad.



## **Westward Expansion After the Civil War**

**1–60**

## **Native Americans: Cultures and Conflicts**

**61–145**



## Creative Commons Licensing

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.



### You are free:

- to **Share**—to copy, distribute, and transmit the work
- to **Remix**—to adapt the work

### Under the following conditions:

**Attribution**—You must attribute the work in the following manner:

*This work is based on an original work of the Core Knowledge® Foundation ([www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)) made available through licensing under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. This does not in any way imply that the Core Knowledge Foundation endorses this work.*

**Noncommercial**—You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

**Share Alike**—If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar license to this one.

### With the understanding that:

For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. The best way to do this is with a link to this web page:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Copyright © 2017 Core Knowledge Foundation  
[www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)

All Rights Reserved.

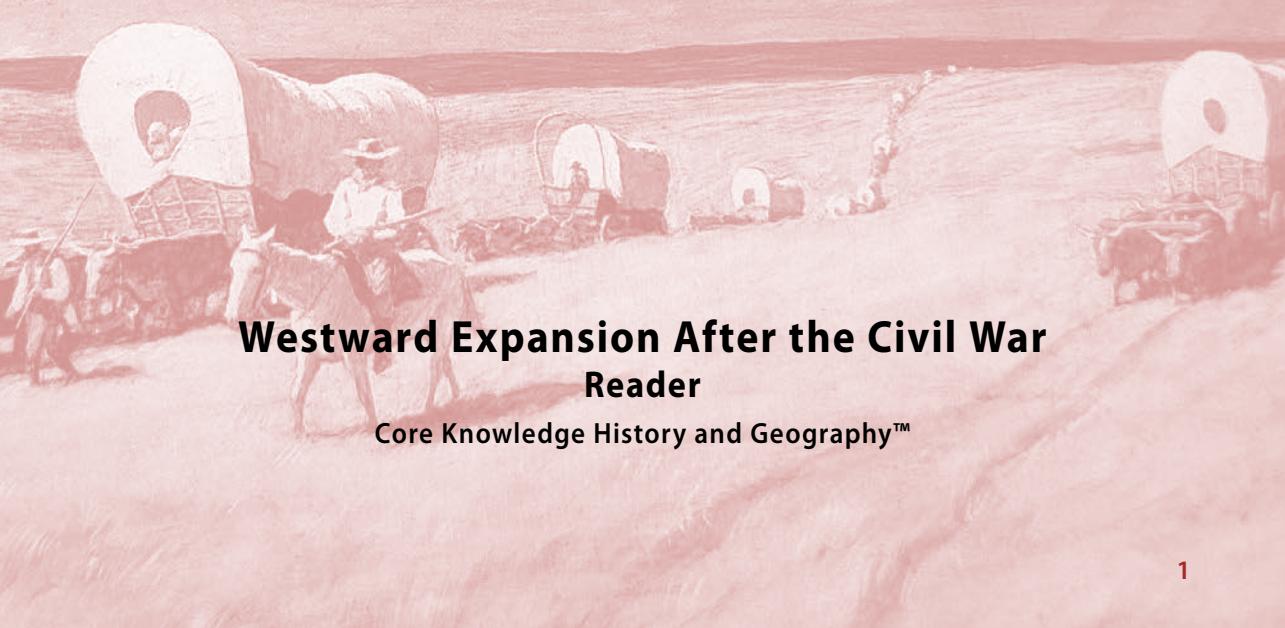
Core Knowledge®, Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™, Core Knowledge History and Geography™ and CKHG™ are trademarks of the Core Knowledge Foundation.

Trademarks and trade names are shown in this book strictly for illustrative and educational purposes and are the property of their respective owners. References herein should not be regarded as affecting the validity of said trademarks and trade names.

# Westward Expansion After the Civil War

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1	<b>The Mining Frontier</b>	2
Chapter 2	<b>Railroads Come to the West</b>	10
Chapter 3	<b>The Cattle Frontier</b>	20
Chapter 4	<b>Farmers Move West</b>	30
Chapter 5	<b>Adjusting to Life on the Plains</b>	38
Chapter 6	<b>Remembering the “Wild West”</b>	44
Chapter 7	<b>The United States Gains Alaska</b>	54
Glossary		60



**Westward Expansion After the Civil War  
Reader**

Core Knowledge History and Geography™

# Chapter 1

# The Mining Frontier

**Gold Fever** In 1858, the North and the South were moving closer to war. But tens of thousands of people were focused elsewhere. These were the people who had gone to California after gold was discovered there. They talked of nothing but gold. They dreamed of becoming fabulously rich.

Most of the eager gold-seekers found nothing but disappointment in California. Then, in the summer of 1858, came news that gold had been found near Pikes Peak, in present-day Colorado. In less than a year, about one hundred thousand people, most of them from California, rushed into the Rocky Mountains, many of them crying out, "Pikes Peak or Bust!"

"Pikes Peak and Bust" would have been more accurate. The region actually had little gold or silver, and those small quantities had been quickly mined out before most of the newcomers arrived.

## The Big Question

How did mining affect the development of the American West?



Most of the gold miners who rushed to find gold in the Rockies came from California. They had already tried and failed to get rich in the earlier Gold Rush of 1849.

Among the disappointed miners at Pikes Peak were two Irish **immigrants**, Pete O'Reilly and Pat McLaughlin. The next year, 1859, these two fortune hunters moved on to the Sierra Nevada Mountains in present-day Nevada. There they **staked a claim** to land in a place called Six Mile Canyon. A man named Henry Comstock talked the two immigrants into making him their partner.

One day, Pete O'Reilly and Pat McLaughlin dug up a chunk of heavy, blue rock. They had never seen anything like it before, so they showed the rock to a couple of rich Californians. The Californians, who knew something about mining, quickly realized that this rock was silver ore. That's not what they told O'Reilly, McLaughlin, and Comstock, though. Instead, they offered to buy the land that the rock had come from for a few thousand dollars.

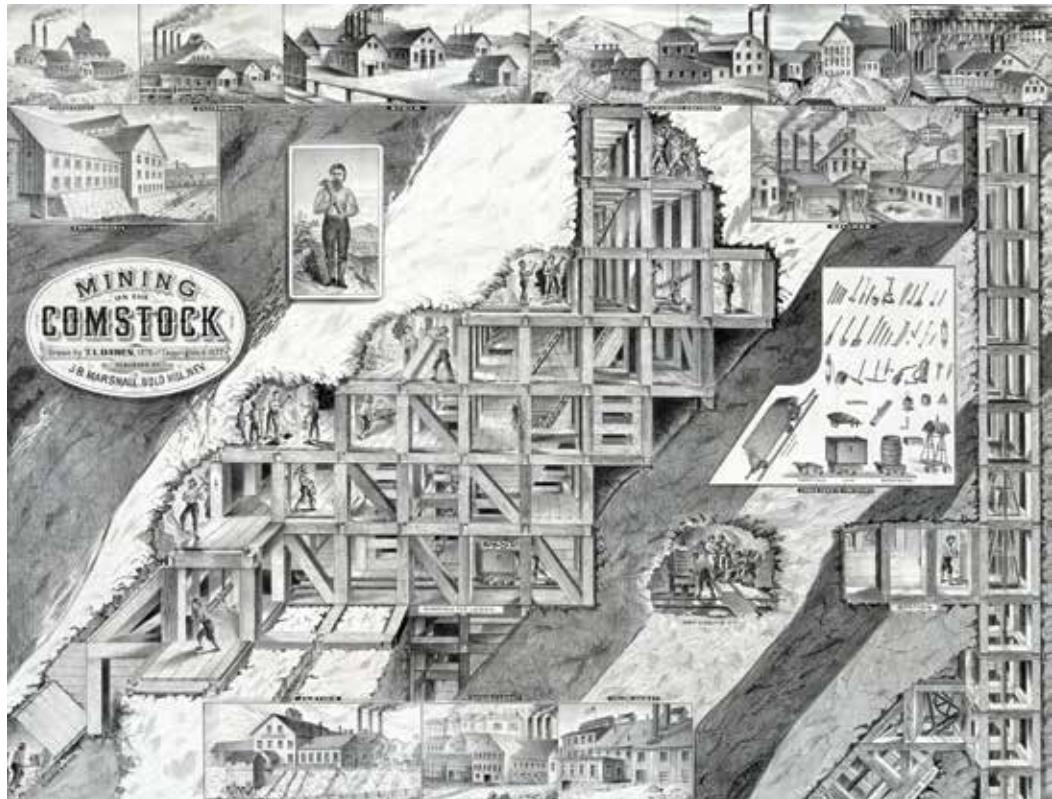
Comstock told his partners to let him deal with the Californians. With his experience, he assured them, he'd get a lot more money out of those rich Californians. And he did. The final price was \$11,000. Split three ways that came to nearly \$3,700 each. Comstock bragged to everyone about the terrific deal he had made. As it turned out, the joke was on him.

During the next twenty years that piece of land and the area around it produced \$500 million worth of silver and gold for its owners! The rich silver deposit was named the Comstock Lode, after the partner who had made the deal.

## Vocabulary

**immigrant**, n. a person from one country who moves to another country to live

**"stake a claim,"** (phrase) to declare ownership of something, such as land



Because the silver ore was found deep in the ground, large mining companies brought in special equipment.

News of the find traveled quickly, and thousands of miners rushed to the region. Hardly a dozen of them became rich. The others soon found that most of the silver ore in Six Mile Canyon was too deep in the ground to dig out with simple pickaxes and shovels. It took large mining companies with expensive machinery to do that. Before long, most of the miners who had gone to Six Mile Canyon to seek their fortunes were working for these mining companies.

## Mining Towns

And so it went all through the West—in present-day Nevada, Colorado, Idaho, Arizona, Montana, and Wyoming. The last great

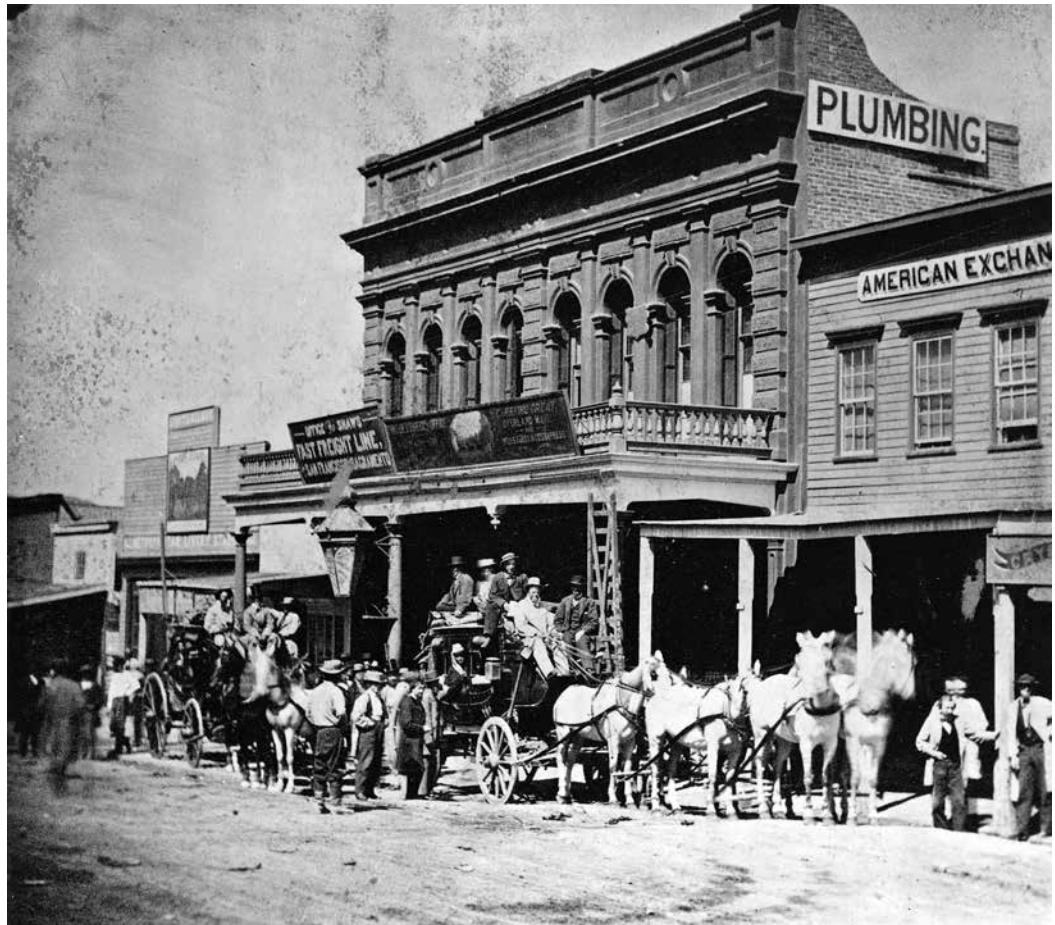
gold rush of the mining frontier was in the Black Hills of present-day South Dakota in 1874. Some of these finds, like the one at Pikes Peak, yielded little gold or silver. Others, like the Comstock Lode, produced incredible riches. Whenever a “strike” was reported or even rumored, hundreds of miners rushed to stake claims to the land. Mining camps sprang up on every nearby hillside. These camps brought together people from many places and from all walks of life. The one thing these different people shared was the dream of instant wealth.

Some did not care how they got that wealth. One person wrote that in the mining camps, “pickpockets, robbers, thieves, and swindlers were mixed with men who had come with honest intentions.” Daring thefts and cold-blooded murders were common in these unruly camps. There were no laws or police in the mining camps to deal with outlaws and thieves, so honest miners made and enforced their own laws. This system of justice came to be known as “**vigilante justice**,” or “frontier justice.” It was often very harsh. Those declared guilty of crimes were likely to be hanged—sometimes without a trial.

Most mining camps remained a collection of tents on a hillside. But a big strike could turn a mining camp into a booming town in no time at all. Within days, merchants would arrive and put up a string of wooden stores along a main street to sell tools,

### Vocabulary

**“vigilante justice,”**  
(phrase) also known as “frontier justice”; when ordinary citizens pursue and punish people accused of crimes instead of the police, other officials, or the courts



Virginia City, Nevada, developed as a mining town.

clothing, and food to the miners. A good many of them became far richer than their customers. Every mining town had gambling houses and saloons. In time, a number of them also had banks, hotels, newspaper offices, and even theaters. Although the mining frontier was mostly a male world, there were women who ran small hotels, boarding houses, and laundries.

The richest of these western mining towns was Virginia City, Nevada. Samuel Clemens, who would later become famous using the name Mark Twain, was at that time a young newspaper

reporter living in Virginia City. He described life in that **boom town**:

*The sidewalks swarmed with people. . . . The streets themselves were just as crowded with . . . wagons, freight teams, and other vehicles. . . . Money was as plenty as dust. . . . There were . . . fire companies, brass bands, banks, hotels, theater, . . . wide open gambling places, . . . street fights, murders, . . . riots, a whiskey mill every fifteen steps.*

### Vocabulary

**boom town**, n. a town that grows quickly in size and wealth

**swarm**, v. to gather or move together in a large group

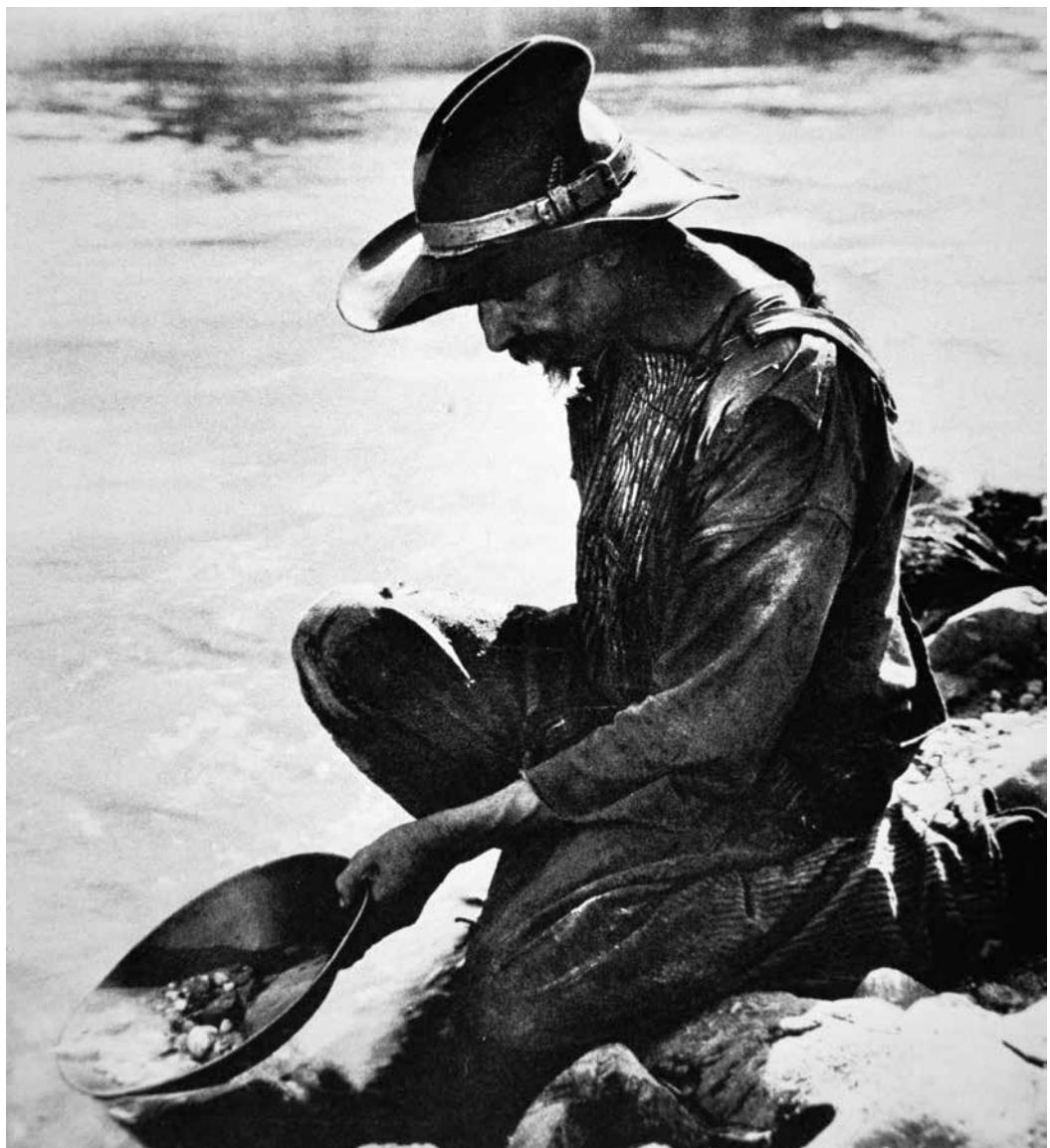
## Settling the Mining Frontier

Some mining towns grew into lasting cities. Last Chance Gulch, for example, became the city of Helena, Montana. But most of these towns blazed brightly for a short time and then, like comets in the sky, were gone. Once the gold or silver was mined out, the miners moved on. Empty buildings gathered dust, and the towns became the ghost towns of the West.

Still, the mining frontier brought people to the West. While most miners did move on, some stayed. So did many of the men and women who ran the stores, farmed the land, raised cattle, and started schools and churches. They raised families and built up the country. Remember those thousands who headed for Pikes Peak, only to find no gold there? Many found work in the nearby town. In that way, mining helped settle the present-day states of Colorado, Nevada, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and South Dakota.

The whole mining frontier lasted for only about twenty-five years, from the great gold rush in California in 1849 until the strike in

South Dakota in 1874. There was still plenty of gold and silver in the West, but it lay deep below Earth's surface, where only the expensive machinery of the big mining companies could get it. By the 1880s, the lone prospector—the person with a pickax, shovel, and pack mule—could still be seen wandering the West in search of that one lucky strike, but his day had passed. And the rowdy, get-rich-quick days of the mining frontier had passed as well.



By the 1880s, the lone prospector was a rare sight. Most mining was done by large companies.

# Chapter 2

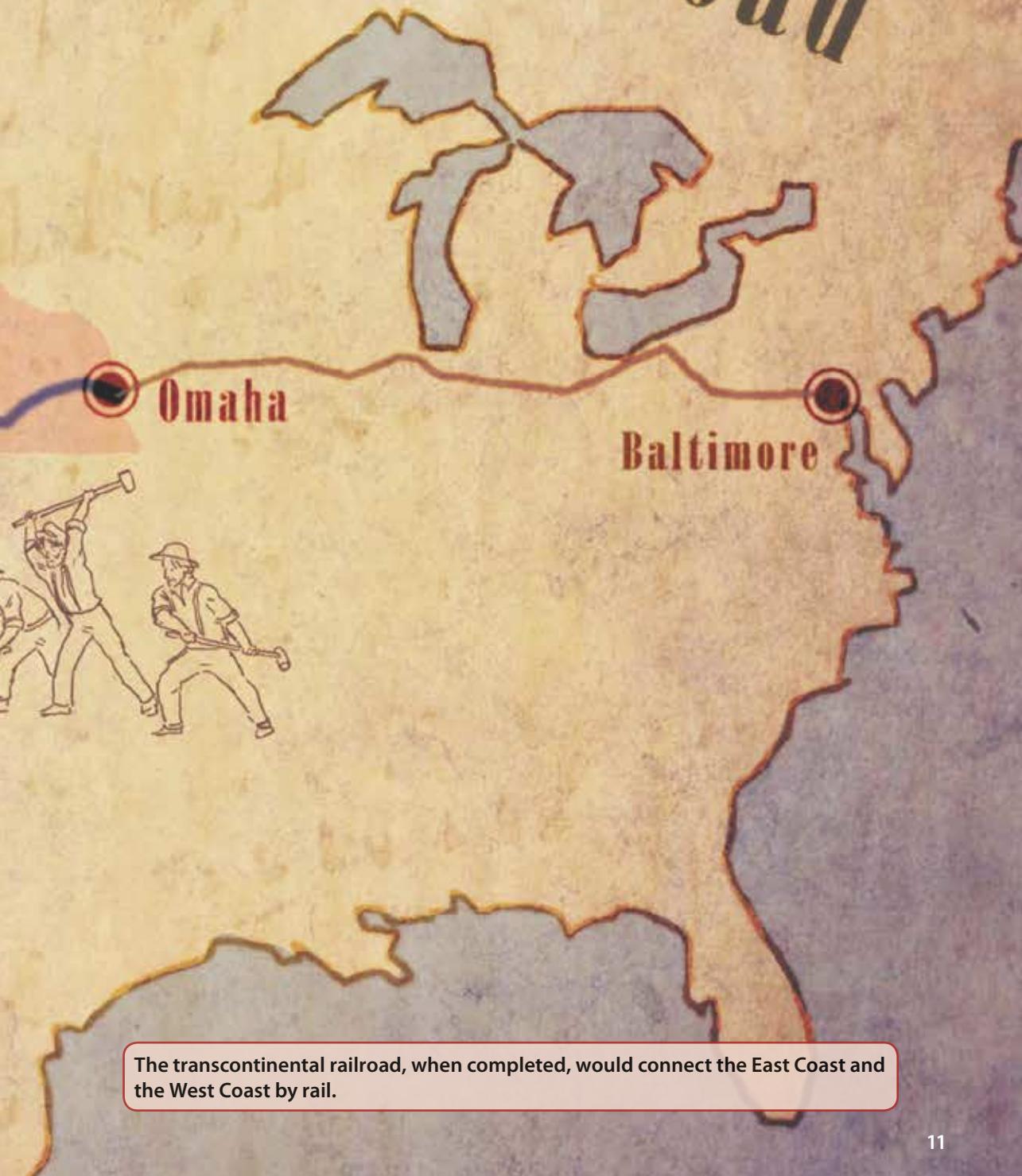
# Railroads Come to the West

**Hard Work** Imagine cutting through solid rock with only a hammer and a chisel. Now picture digging a tunnel through a mountain that way. Imagine carrying heavy pieces of wood and iron rails all day in temperatures more than 100°F. Or in temperatures below 0°F.

## The Big Question

What were the benefits and drawbacks of the transcontinental railroad?

# transcontinental Railroad



In the 1860s, thousands of men did those things, and more, in building the nation's first **transcontinental** railroad—the first railroad to connect the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of America.

**Vocabulary**  
**transcontinental**,  
adj. across a continent

Soon after the Civil War started, Congress passed a law to build this transcontinental railroad. At the time, railroads already reached as far west as Omaha, Nebraska, so the new line would only have to go from there to the Pacific Coast. *Only* was still a distance of 1,800 miles—longer than any railroad line ever built!

Congress named two companies to construct this railroad line. The Union Pacific Railroad Company would build westward from Omaha. The Central Pacific would build eastward from Sacramento, California. The two lines would connect somewhere in between.

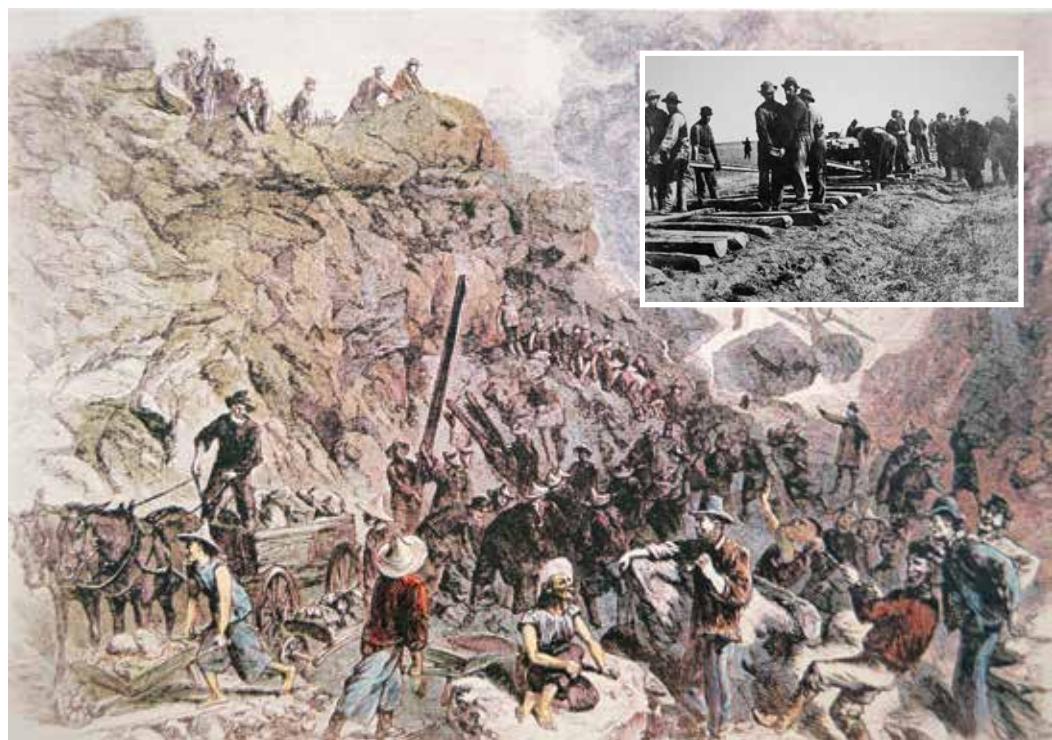
To help these companies, the U.S. government gave each company a gift of ten square miles of land alongside each mile of track they built. The idea was that once the railroad was built, that land would become valuable and the railroad could sell it. The government also lent each company money to help pay for the construction. With that kind of encouragement, each company raced to build as many miles of track as it could.

## Spanning the Continent

The transcontinental railroad was the grandest construction project of the age. In size and in difficulty, it dwarfed any other building project of that time. The two companies employed more than twenty thousand people to build the railroad. No other

organization, except the army, had ever brought together so many people to work on one project. No other single railroad project had even come close to building a line 1,800 miles long. No other project faced a task as difficult as building over, around, and through tall mountains. Just gathering the supplies to get started was a major job. For example, no one in California manufactured iron rails or locomotives. That meant the Central Pacific Railroad Company, which was starting from California, had to get nearly all its supplies from the East by sea—an eighteen-thousand-mile voyage that took at least six months.

The men had to work in all weather. One winter there were forty-four storms. Most of the workers on the Central Pacific were Chinese immigrants. They had come to California hoping



Without the Chinese workers it would have been impossible to complete the railway line on time. Irish workers (seen in inset) also worked on the line.

to find riches in the gold fields. Now they did the backbreaking and dangerous work of laying railroad tracks through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The head of the Central Pacific Railroad Company said, "Without them it would be impossible to complete the line on time."

At first, working in gangs of thirty each, they labored twelve hours a day, six days a week. They chopped trees and cut them into **railroad ties**. They built railroad bridges. Hardest of all, they dug through mountains. This was before the days of steam shovels, bulldozers, giant cranes, and drilling machines. Workers had only hammers, chisels, pickaxes, shovels, and wheelbarrows. They used dynamite too, but it was sometimes very dangerous and accidents and deaths did occur. Only after reaching flatter land on the other side of the mountains did the work get any easier.

At first, workers on the Union Pacific line were mainly Irish immigrants, but the railroad company also hired Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans. After the Civil War ended in 1865, army veterans from both the North and the South joined the work crews. While these workers also had to lay track across some mountains, most of their building stretched across the **Great Plains**. Laying track across flat **prairie** land was certainly easier than cutting through mountains, but it had its own difficulties. Winter temperatures on the plains can be brutally

### Vocabulary

**"railroad ties,"**  
(phrase) wood planks used to support railroad tracks

**Great Plains**, n. a region of relatively flat grassland between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains

**prairie**, n. grassland

cold, with winds that feel like they can cut right through you. Just to stay alive, the shivering men sometimes used precious railroad ties to build bonfires. In addition, the Union Pacific was building on lands that for centuries had been home to Native Americans. The farther onto those lands the railroad pushed, the greater the danger of attack by Native American warriors. After a number of such attacks, the railroad company called on the army to protect its workers. Most of the railroad, in fact, had to be built under military protection.



**Native Americans fought to save their land from the railroad companies and other forms of development.**

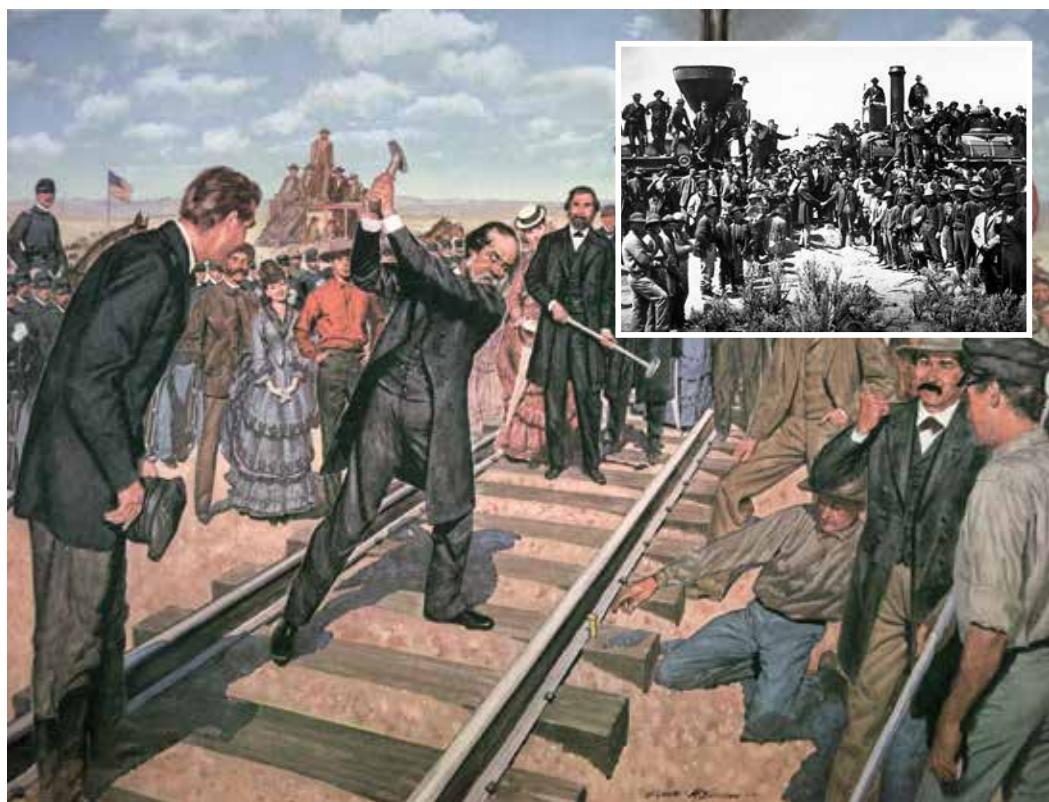
## Driving the Golden Spike

Year after year, under blazing summer sun and in below-zero winter cold, the work went forward. Finally, on May 10, 1869, the two lines met at Promontory Point, Utah. Leland Stanford, Jr., president of the Central Pacific, was given the honor of driving the final spike into the last railroad tie. To celebrate the occasion, the spike was made of gold.

With each swing of Stanford's hammer, the **telegraph** flashed the news to a waiting nation: "One, two, three—done!" and cheers rang out all over America. (To be accurate, the telegraph message should have been,

### Vocabulary

**telegraph**, n.  
a machine that  
communicates  
messages over long  
distances by sending  
signals through wires



Leland Stanford, Jr., hammered the final spike of the transcontinental railroad.

"one, two, three, *four*—done!" On his first swing, Stanford had missed everything. You can imagine the howls of laughter from the working crews who were watching the ceremony.)

Four more transcontinental railroads were built in the next twenty-five years, two farther north and two farther south of the first one. From one coast to another, gleaming ribbons of track now tied the nation together.

## Railroads Help Develop the West

The new transcontinental railroads helped open the West to more and more settlement. It's easy to understand why. Before the railroads, there were only three routes to California from the East. Two were by sea, either going all the way around the tip of South America or going as far as Panama, cutting across to the Pacific Ocean through the jungle, and then taking a ship north. The third was by railroad to Omaha and then by wagon, horseback, or on foot across the plains and through the mountain passes. Each of these trips could take about half a year. However, after the golden spike was driven into the track in Utah that day in May 1869, you could make the trip from Omaha to San Francisco, California, *in less than four days!*

Railroad companies did everything they could to encourage people to move west. The more people who did, the more tickets the companies sold. More settlers meant more crops, and that meant more business for the railroads that carried the crops to the East. The western farmers now fed the millions of people living in massive eastern cities. Railroads advertised the inexpensive land

people could get in the West. They even advertised in many of the port cities in Europe. The railroads and telegraphs linked all the sections of the country together.

Railroads also helped cities grow. News that a railroad company was going to build its line through a town brought cheers from the townspeople. Railroads brought prosperity. New jobs were created in countless ways. Farmers from nearby areas needed to rent storage space while waiting to load their grain onto railroad cars. Cattle ranchers bringing their animals to town for shipment to market needed to buy feed. Passengers spending the night needed restaurants to eat in and hotels to sleep in.

Towns where two or more railroad lines met became especially prosperous. That's why many towns did all they could to persuade railroad companies to choose them for one of these crossing points. For example, one railroad company had to choose between Kansas City, Missouri, and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, two towns of about the same size. The railroad company chose Kansas City. In the thirty years that followed, Kansas City became a large city, while Fort Leavenworth remained a small town. Chicago was already a growing city when it became the chief railroad center in the nation. After that, Chicago increased greatly in size and, by 1890, it had become the country's second-largest city.

*La Salle St., Station, Chicago. C. R. I. & P. R. R.-L. S. & M.  
S. R. R.-N. Y. C. & St. L. R. R.-C. & E. I. R. R.-C. I. &  
S. R. R.*



Railroads helped Chicago become America's second-largest city.

# Chapter 3

# The Cattle Frontier

**Nature's Gift** Even before that historic joining at Promontory Point in 1869, large numbers of Americans had already moved to the West. Some, as you read earlier, were lured there by the hope of finding gold and silver. Others hoped to become rich from something far more ordinary: grass.

Grass was everywhere. It covered millions and millions of acres of the western plains—an incredibly large area of land. In the end, many more people became rich from ordinary grass than from precious gold.

## The Rise of Cattle

Grass made the rise of a great cattle industry in the West possible. The story of that industry begins nearly three hundred years earlier, when ships from Spain brought cattle to the colony of Mexico. Unlike in Spain, where they had been fenced in, the cattle in Mexico were allowed to roam freely, finding their own grass and water. Over the centuries that followed, the cattle wandered into northern Mexico and into South Texas. And they multiplied.

### The Big Question

How did the rise of the cattle industry shape the use of land?



Many people became rich from the grasslands of the western plains.



Cattle descended from the first Spanish cattle in North America have horns that span four to seven feet from tip to tip.

By 1860, there were about five million cattle in just one small corner of Texas, between the Rio Grande and the town of San Antonio. Because their horns could be as large as seven feet across, the cattle came to be called longhorns.

These longhorns belonged to no one. They were anyone's for the taking. Yet few Texans bothered to do so. They were so numerous that no one in Texas would pay more than \$3 or \$4 for one cow. That was hardly enough to pay the cost of rounding them up and keeping them on a ranch.

Texans knew there was a profitable market for beef in the far-off cities of the East. If they could find a way to get their cattle there, they could easily get \$30 or \$40 for each cow.

The obvious solution to their problem was the railroad. But there was no railroad line between southern Texas and the East, and it could be many years before one was built. In the meantime, the

nearest railroad line to the East was in Sedalia, Missouri, a good thousand miles away.

Soon after the end of the Civil War, several ranchers figured it out: if they couldn't bring the railroad to the cattle, maybe they could bring the cattle to the railroad. They would herd the cattle to Sedalia, letting them **graze** on grass as they went. It would take maybe three months to get there. No one knew what problems might occur along the way, but if they succeeded, they would make a fortune.

### Vocabulary

**graze**, v. to eat grass, crops, and other plants in a field

## The Long Drive

From this idea sprang the “long drive.” In spring 1866, ranchers brought their herds together and set out for Sedalia. This was the first organized drive. Unfortunately for them, they chose a poor route. Much of the trail led through wooded areas where it was difficult to control the herd. Parts of the trail crossed fenced-in



Texas cattle drivers spent months out in the open, keeping track of and steering thousands of longhorns.

farms, and other parts ran through Native American territory. The large herd of longhorns caused damage and spread disease as they moved across the land, making farmers angry. At times, heavy rains turned the trail into mud. Most of the 260,000 cattle that started out on the long drive died or were lost or stolen along the way. Still, for every animal that made it to Sedalia, the owners got \$35. They had found the way to their fortune. Despite the many difficulties, the Sedalia route was used until around 1870. The next year, Texas cattle ranchers chose a route farther west, across open plains. This route was called the Chisholm Trail.

### Cattle Drives and Railroads



Ranchers drove their cattle north from Texas to railway centers. As you can see, the transcontinental railway was constructed by two railroad companies.

Here there were no trees or farms or mud—only endless acres of grass. At the end of the trail lay Abilene, Kansas. From Abilene, a new railroad line ran directly to Chicago. This time nearly all the animals made it. The long drive to Abilene was a huge success. As railroads pushed westward, cattle ranchers set out on trails farther west to new cow towns that rose up. Over the years, about ten million cattle plodded their way to these towns from Texas for shipment east.

## The Cattle Kingdom Moves North

In time, cattle ranchers learned that the animals could survive the colder winters farther north. That land was much closer to the railroad line, and the U.S. government, which owned the land, allowed cattle to graze for free. Many ranchers took their herds north to save the cost of the long drive. Soon the cattle kingdom stretched from Texas northward to Montana and from Kansas westward to the Rocky Mountains. For a time, cattle ranchers made huge fortunes. But the good times did not last. The cattle ranchers soon faced competition from sheepherders for the use of the free grass. Sheep nibble grass close to the roots, leaving little or nothing for cattle. Bitter warfare between cattle ranchers and sheepherders often flared up.

Then, as you will read in the next chapter, farmers began to arrive on the **open range** in large numbers, plowing up the land and fencing it off. Cattle ranchers added to their own problems by increasing the size

### Vocabulary

**open range**, n. land where cattle roam freely

of their herds too much. They raised more cattle than the buyers wanted. Prices began to fall.

All this, and the fact that longhorn cattle carried a tick-borne disease that devastated other breeds, made raising cattle very challenging. Nature delivered the final blow in the winter of 1886–1887. Two terrible winters and a hot, dry summer that killed grass and dried up streams destroyed more than 80 percent of the cattle. After that, ranchers saw they could no longer depend so completely on the grass of the open range to feed their herds. So they fenced in their cattle and raised enough feed to take care of them through the winter.

## The Cowboy

The cattle kingdom gave birth to the colorful character of the cowboy. People all over the world know the American cowboy. They have played at being cowboys or seen a cowboy movie or television show.

However, the cowboys on TV are not much like the real ones. One in every three or four cowboys was Mexican. (It was the Mexican *vaquero*, or cowboy, who taught the American cowboy all his skills, from riding to roping.) There were many African American cowboys who had left the South after the Civil War. Others were Native Americans. Many were teenagers. By the time most cowboys reached the age of thirty, they had sold their saddles and turned to other work.

Also, the real cowboy did not lead a life of constant excitement and adventure. The real cowboy's job was pretty much what the name says it was: to herd cows. He was a hired hand, not the independent hero who rode where he wished and did what he wanted. For eight

or nine months of the year, what he mainly did was “ride the line” between his boss’s ranch and the neighbor’s, trying to keep his cattle from wandering away.

Twice a year, cowboys from all the ranches joined in a cattle roundup. In the spring, they **branded** newborn calves with the owner’s special mark. After that the animals

### Vocabulary

**brand**, v. to mark with a symbol of ownership



The work was hard, and most cowboys were young men. They were excellent riders.

were allowed to graze once again on the open plains. In the fall, cowboys separated those cattle ready for market from the rest of the herd.

## Working on the Long Drive

Then came the hardest part of the cowboy's work—the long drive. For two or three months, seven days a week, in all kinds of weather, cowboys spent up to eighteen hours a day in the saddle, riding alongside, behind, and ahead of the herd. Only mealtimes broke up their long, weary days. Sitting cross-legged on the ground, they ate the same boring food day after day. At night, they bedded down on the hard prairie, with their saddles for pillows.

The cowboy's greatest worry was a cattle **stampede**. Lightning, thunder, even a tiny sound like a small animal moving in the brush or a cowboy striking a match could frighten and set off the cattle. Then, for a few terrifying hours, the cowboy had all the adventure he could handle. The trick to ending the stampede was to force the animals to run in a wide circle until they tired and calmed down. Sometimes stampedes took place in the dark of night, perhaps with neither moon nor stars to help the rider see the ground ahead of him. It was dangerous work. If the cowboy did not do it skillfully, he would lose his life.

Like the mining frontier, the great age of the cowboy lasted only about twenty-five years, from the late 1860s to 1890. By then, as you will read in the next chapter, farmers had taken up much of the land on the plains. The growing number of farms, as well as

### Vocabulary

**stampede**, n. the rushed movement of a large group of animals



**Stampedes were among the biggest dangers cowboys faced during a long drive.**

the increased use of readily available cheap barbed wire fencing, helped end the drives. Also, when the cattle kingdom moved north, there was no longer any need for the long drive. Many ranches were hardly a day's drive from the railroads. Finally, following the terrible winters that led ranchers to move their herds off the open range, there were no more spring and fall roundups, either.

With these changes, the cowboy of old passed from the scene. He now became simply a ranch hand, who spent more time digging holes for fence posts than riding horseback and herding cattle.

# Chapter 4

# Farmers Move West

**The Plains** In the early years of the United States, the country's frontier had moved steadily westward as settlers looked for fresh farmland. Then, around the 1840s, it suddenly stopped. Farm families were no longer willing to establish yet another frontier. Why? Geography.

## The Big Question

What attracted farmers to the Great Plains?



Standing at the eastern edge of the plains, pioneers would have seen grass all the way to a very distant horizon.

Across the middle of the country stretches a vast area of relatively flat land. From the Rio Grande in the South, the plains reach more than three thousand miles north, into Canada. At their widest, the plains extend more than one thousand miles from the Appalachian Mountains to the Rocky Mountains. In the 1840s, before modern development, the plains were open country as far as the eye could see.

These vast plains have two major parts:

- The Interior Lowlands lie between the Appalachian Mountains and roughly 100° W longitude. This meridian passes through North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. The lowlands receive thirty to forty inches of **precipitation** a year. Abundant water and fertile soil made this part of the plains perfect for farming. Grass, trees, and more grew across this wide region.
- The Great Plains run from 100° W longitude to the Rocky Mountains. Winters on the Great Plains are very cold, and summers are very hot. Precipitation averages as little as ten or fifteen inches a year. In some years, the region receives far less. For this reason, even though the soil is rich, few trees grow on the Great Plains.

Maps in the 1840s called this part of the plains the Great American Desert.

Hearty grasses covered the Great Plains as far as the eye could see. In the hot summer sun, this grass turned brown. The lack of trees meant little wood for building and burning. And the thick soil, though rich, was hard to **till**, or turn. It stuck to early iron plows.

### Vocabulary

**precipitation**, n.

water falling to Earth's surface as rain, hail, snow, sleet, and mist

**till**, v. to break up soil so crops can be planted

## The Great Plains

Many farm families decided that the Great Plains was not the place to settle. So, in the 1840s, western settlement leaped nearly two thousand miles across the Great Plains to the West. Then, after the Civil War, American settlers and European immigrants swarmed onto the Great Plains. Despite the challenges, they started farms. From 1870–1890, farmers claimed more land on the Great Plains than the size of England and France combined.

Why did farmers change their minds?

What drew them to the Great Plains in the late 1860s? First, the **weather pattern** changed. For eight years, the Great Plains received higher than normal rainfall.

### Vocabulary

**"weather pattern,"**  
(phrase) weather that repeats over a period of time



In the late 1800s, settlers moved to the Great Plains in large numbers.

Many believed that the climate itself had changed. They trusted that the Great Plains would continue to enjoy higher rainfall. (They were wrong, but they did not find that out until some years later.)

Second, new technologies made it easier to farm, build, and get water on the open plains. Steel plows were better able to turn the sticky soil. Windmills pumped up groundwater from wells. Barbed wire made it possible to build fences, and railroads brought other needed supplies. Farmers also learned to grow wheat and other grains well-suited to the climate.

Finally, great land bargains made it less expensive to buy land. Remember that the U.S. government gave railroads land to encourage them to extend the lines west. The railroads turned around and sold this land to farmers at low prices. Across the United States, and in Europe, railroads advertised cheap land to settlers.

One poster read: "MILLIONS OF ACRES—IOWA AND NEBRASKA LANDS FOR SALE ON 10 YEARS **CREDIT**." The railroad even offered "land exploring tickets." This meant that people could buy railroad tickets to come see the land for sale. If they decided to buy land within thirty days of getting the ticket, the railroad would fully refund their fare. The railroad made money no matter what people decided. It made money from the fare or from the sale of the land. The railroad also made money when the buyers

### Vocabulary

**credit**, n. a system of buying now and paying later

started farms and used the railroad to ship their crops to midwestern and eastern cities.

**LARGE DISCOUNTS FOR CASH.**

**BETTER TERMS THAN EVER !**



VALLEY OF THE BIG BLUE, SOUTH OF SEWARD, NEB.

**THE BEST  
PRAIRIE LANDS  
IN  
IOWA AND NEBRASKA**

ARE FOR SALE BY THE  
**Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Co.**

**10 Years' Credit. LOW PRICES 6 Per Cent. Interest.**

**ONLY THE INTEREST PAYMENT DOWN.  
PAYMENTS ON PRINCIPAL BEGIN THE FOURTH YEAR.**

**BUY LAND EXPLORING TICKETS.**  
And the Cost of Same will be Allowed on First Payment made on Land bought within 90 Days from Date of Ticket.  
HALF FARE to Families of Purchasers. LOW FREIGHTS on Household Goods and Farm Stock.  
Let Circulars with full information on every question, will be sent FREE to every applicant.

ADDRESSES:

Large sectional Map of Iowa, 50 cents.  
Nebraska, 50 cents.

LAND COMMISSIONER B. & M. R. R.,  
LINCOLN, NEB., for Nebraska Lands.  
BURLINGTON, IOWA, for Iowa Lands.

Attn: Blackmar & Co's Print. Burlington, Iowa.

**PREMIUMS FOR IMPROVEMENTS.**

**BUY BEFORE JULY 1st, 1875, and Secure these Terms.**

Railroad companies encouraged people to buy land in the Great Plains.

## Free Land

The federal government offered an even bigger land bargain. In 1862, Congress passed the Homestead Act. This law gave 160 acres of land free to anyone who would settle on it and farm for at least five years. These **homesteads** were available to Americans and to immigrants. In Europe, many farm families struggled to survive on only three or four acres of worn-out land. The United States offered them a chance to get fresh land—160 acres of it.

During the next forty years, the United States gave away eighty million acres of land under the Homestead Act. That was about a half million farms!

The Homestead Act aimed, in part, to help poor people start family farms. However, even with free land, poor families could not afford other farm costs, such as fencing, plows, animals, barns, and seed. Therefore, most people able to “homestead” on the plains were already farmers who had saved some money.

Still, some poor people did manage to homestead. Among them were African Americans from the South. After the Civil War, thousands of these formerly enslaved people set out for Kansas. Borrowing a term from the Bible, they called themselves Exodusters, because they were making an exodus, or departure, from their homes. They hoped to start better lives for themselves on western lands.

### Vocabulary

**homestead**, n. a home and the land surrounding it



**After the Civil War, African American families also went west to settle on the Great Plains.**

# Chapter 5

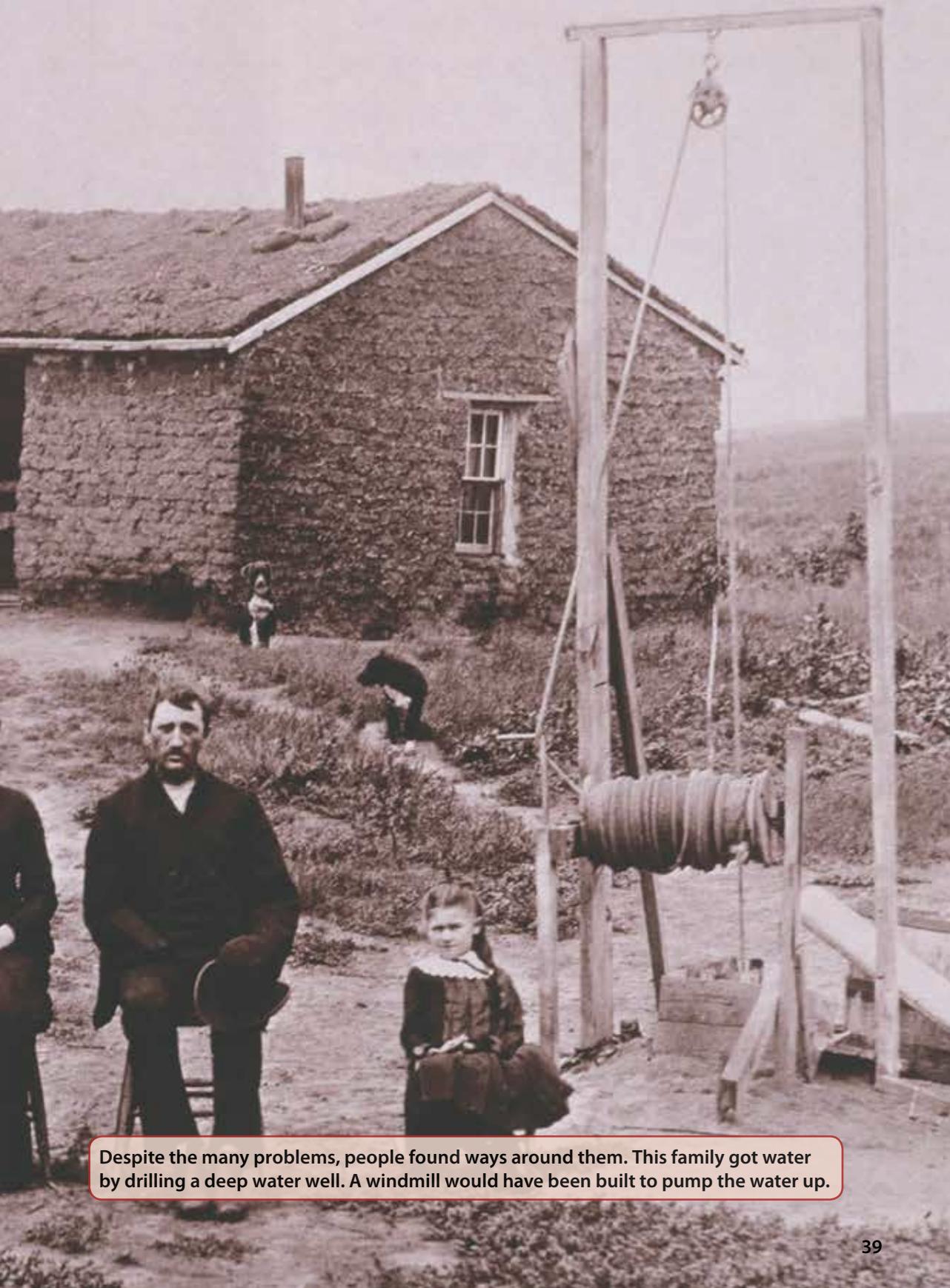
# Adjusting to Life on the Plains

**A Hard Life** Farm families settling on the Great Plains found a climate and land different from anything they had known in the East or in Europe. Temperatures in the summer went as high as 110°F; in the winter they often fell below 0°F. Strong winds swept across the treeless plains.

## The Big Question

How did farmers adjust to the hardships of the Great Plains?

Settlers were used to building log cabins and heating them with wood fires. Without trees, that was impossible. Yet families managed. With little wood or stone available, they built houses of sod, which is the top layer of grassy soil, complete with its tangled roots. On the sunbaked plains, this sod was almost as hard as rock. After a rain or melting snow softened it, farmers cut it into long, flat bricks. They piled the bricks one upon another, two to three rows thick, to make walls. They used what little wood they could find to make a roof, with another layer of sod piled on that. The thick walls kept the inside warm in winter and cool in summer. Wealthier farmers even had



Despite the many problems, people found ways around them. This family got water by drilling a deep water well. A windmill would have been built to pump the water up.

small glass windows. In a letter to friends back in New England, a woman who had moved to the Kansas frontier wrote, "We have but one room, in which we all eat, drink, and sleep, and that is not as large as your kitchen." Dirt was forever crumbling from the walls and ceiling. Insects, snakes, and small animals came through the walls. Rain, always welcome on the Great Plains, also meant leaky roofs and walls for days afterward.

Getting water for daily needs was another problem. One option was to drill a well two hundred to three hundred feet deep and build a windmill to pump the water up. Farmers could count on the strong winds that swept the plains to provide power for the windmill. However, digging wells and building windmills was costly. Few farmers could afford to get their household water that way. Most got their water from a nearby pond or spring, the way this woman's family did:

This spring, about a half mile or more distant, was the nearest source of good water. . . . A yoke was made to place across the shoulders, so as to carry at each end a bucket of water, and then water was brought a half mile from spring to house. Both father and mother carried water thus from day to day.

Farmers on the plains learned to burn corncobs for fuel.

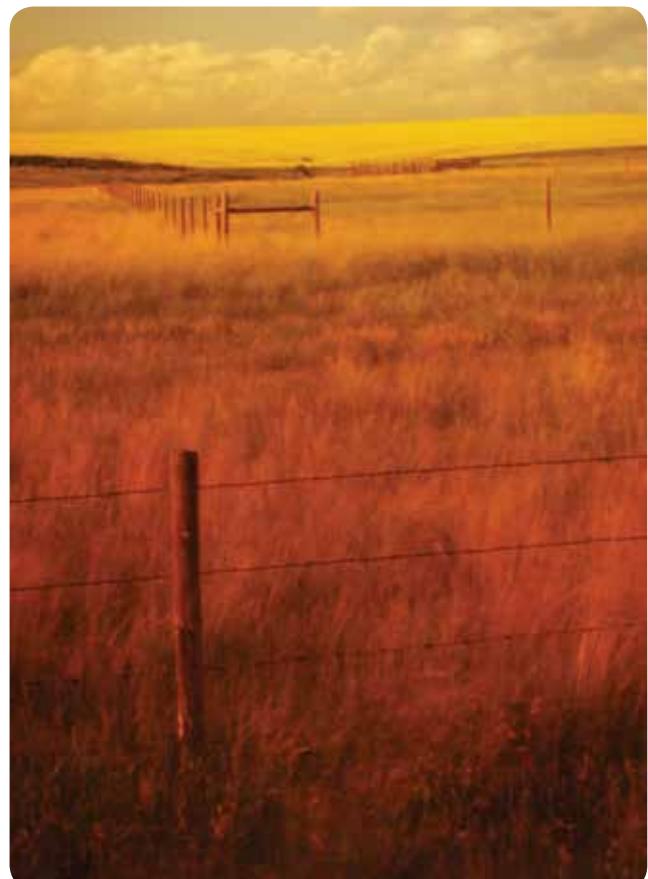
Perhaps the hardest thing about life on the Great Plains was the loneliness. Farms were far apart. There might not even be a small village nearby. Farm families might go many days without seeing another person. A well-known author of a hundred years ago named Hamlin Garland grew up on a farm on the prairies of northern Iowa. After he became famous, he wrote his own life

story. In it he described the loneliness of farm life. Plowing was an especially lonely job:

It meant moving to and fro hour after hour, day after day, with no one to talk to but the horses. I cheered myself in every imaginable way. I whistled. I sang. I studied the clouds . . . and I counted the prairie chickens.

## Learning New Ways of Farming

Farming on the plains had its own challenges, too. As on every farm, the farmer had to plow the land before planting. But here the sod was so tough that the farmer's iron plow often broke. The shortage of water, of course, was a big problem. So was the absence of wood for the fencing needed to keep cattle from trampling young crops. But three inventions helped farmers succeed on the Great Plains. One was the lightweight steel plow, which cut through the tough sod. Another was barbed wire, which is a type of wire that has sharp points every few feet.



The widespread use of barbed wire changed the use of the land on the plains from ranching to farming.

Farmers now needed only enough wood for the fence posts to hold the long strands of barbed wire.

The third invention, a new method of farming called dry farming, is still used in some places today. In dry farming, when rain comes, shallow **ditches** on each side of the growing plants capture the water. As soon as the rain stops, the soil in those ditches is turned over. This moves the wet soil underneath, closer to the roots of the plants, and keeps it from drying out through **evaporation**. This method of farming works best on smaller homesteads, not on huge farms with a lot of acreage. Farmers also switched to new kinds of wheat and other crops that needed less water.

### Vocabulary

**ditch**, n. a narrow channel dug in the ground

**evaporation**, n. the process by which a liquid changes to a vapor or gas

Farmers faced one problem they could not solve: grasshoppers. These insects appeared on the plains every few years, in such numbers that they devoured everything in their path. Imagine standing in your farmyard, filled with pride as you look out at tall corn ripening in the sun, sure the good harvest will bring money to pay off debts or buy new machinery. Then you hear a faint humming noise in the distance. The hum swells into a deafening roar. The sky darkens. Millions upon millions of grasshoppers block out the sun. The insects drop down, and you watch helplessly as your crop vanishes. One settler, to whom this happened in 1873, wrote:

So thick were the grasshoppers in the cornfield of which both of us had been so proud, that not a spot of green could be seen.



Farmers tried many methods to save their crops from swarms of grasshoppers, sometimes even starting smoky fires from the bodies of dead grasshoppers.

And within two hours of the time that they had come not a leaf was left in all that field.

Despite all the **hardships**, farm families continued to move onto the Great Plains. Nothing could turn back the tide. Not the grasshoppers. Not the cattle ranchers, who complained about the farmer's barbed wire fences. Not even the return of dry weather, which caused many a farm family to give up and go back to the East. By the end of the 1800s, the Great Plains had become the nation's chief producer of grain.

### Vocabulary

**hardship**, n. a difficulty

# Chapter 6

# Remembering the “Wild West”

**Moving West** Throughout its history, America has had many “Wests.” To the first English colonists, the West was anywhere west of their small settlements on the Atlantic Coast. A hundred years later, the West had become the land leading up to the Appalachian Mountains, where mostly Scots-Irish immigrants settled before the American Revolution.

## The Big Question

How did the legends of the Wild West come about?





To American settlers, the ever-shifting “West” offered seemingly endless opportunities for growth.

After Daniel Boone crossed the Cumberland Gap in 1769, there was a new American West—the land west of the Appalachians, up to the Mississippi River. With Lewis and Clark's journey of exploration, the whole huge area between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains became American's newest West.

Then there was the idea of Manifest Destiny. This was an idea that more and more people embraced. They believed that the United States was destined, or meant, to span the continent, to stretch from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. It was their right to do so. Many Americans saw westward settlement—including the forced relocation of Native Americans—as part of the country's Manifest Destiny.

The West also came to mean the frontier—that line that marked the farthest edge of white American settlement. Americans watched with pride and wonder as that line moved steadily, relentlessly westward all through the 1880s. As that line pushed forward, little thought was given to the Native Americans who were being forced from their homes.

Some Americans opposed the rapid expansion of the frontier. One of them was Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*. In 1843, several hundred Americans were about to set out across the Great Plains for Oregon. Greeley wrote that their plan was “**foolhardy**” and amounted to “insanity.”

He predicted 90 percent would never reach their destination alive. He believed they would die of starvation or in attacks by angry Native Americans.

### Vocabulary

**foolhardy**, adj.  
reckless; without care or caution

But nearly all of them reached Oregon and sent back reports about their happy life there. Horace Greeley changed his mind. He soon became a strong supporter of the westward movement. He advised his readers to, "Go West, young man, and grow up with the country." Greeley himself took a trip to the West just before the Civil War. As a result, he became even more enthusiastic about the region.

## Oklahoma Land Rush

Americans didn't really need Horace Greeley's advice. They had been gobbling up land since the nation's founding.

Their hunger for **ore** never seemed to be satisfied. As farmers swarmed across the Great Plains, however, there remained the area known as Indian Territory, which is present-day Oklahoma. Back in the 1830s, the U.S. government had forced Native Americans, primarily tribes from the southeast including the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Creek (or Muscogee) to move there. They promised that Native Americans would be able to live there without interference by settlers.

Settlers pressured the U.S. government to allow them to have this land as well. The United States forced the Native Americans to sell back two million acres. This land was then divided into homesteads of 160 acres and given to the settlers.

Even this was not enough to satisfy land-hungry settlers. So the government announced it would give away more land. On April 22, 1889, starting at noon, a large part of western Oklahoma

### Vocabulary

**ore**, n. rock from which metal can be obtained

promised to the Native Americans would be given away free to settlers. First come, first served. Little thought was given to the Native Americans whose land was once again being taken away.

On the morning of April 22, about one hundred thousand people gathered along the Oklahoma border. They came on horses, in wagons, on bicycles, and on foot. The land giveaway had become a race to get the best land.

At noon, the starter fired his gun. The rush for land was on! Settlers swarmed the land like grasshoppers descending on a field of corn. In just two hours, nearly every homestead had been claimed.

Towns sprang up where none had existed before. Before the starter fired his gun at noon on April 22, the town of Guthrie, Oklahoma, did not even exist. By sunset, Guthrie had a population of fifteen thousand!



The Oklahoma land rush brought not only new homesteaders but also new towns.

## The Closing of the Frontier

In 1890, just a year after the Oklahoma land rush, the U.S. **Census** Bureau made a startling announcement. The frontier was no more.

Remember, the frontier was an imaginary line that marked the farthest edge of white settlement. The Census Bureau announcement did not mean that there was no more unsettled land in the West. There was plenty of it—most of it in areas too dry for farming without large-scale **irrigation**. So what the Census Bureau actually meant was that there was no place left with the right amount of rainfall that would be good for farming.

The Census Bureau's announcement did not mean the end of homesteading. Millions of acres in states like Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and North and South Dakota remained undeveloped. The government continued to give away these lands to those willing to farm. In fact, more homesteads were started *after* the 1890 announcement than before.

Certainly, the closing of the frontier did not mean the end of opportunity for Americans or the end of the chance to make their fortunes. There were opportunities throughout the land, not just in the West but in all sections of the country, and especially in its growing cities.

### Vocabulary

**census**, n. a count of the number of people living in a certain area

**irrigation**, n. a method of watering crops by moving water from a well, a river, or a lake to a place where it does not rain enough to grow crops

Still, the announcement was significant. For many Americans it marked the end of an era. Though the stories of westward expansion lived on, the frontier was gone.

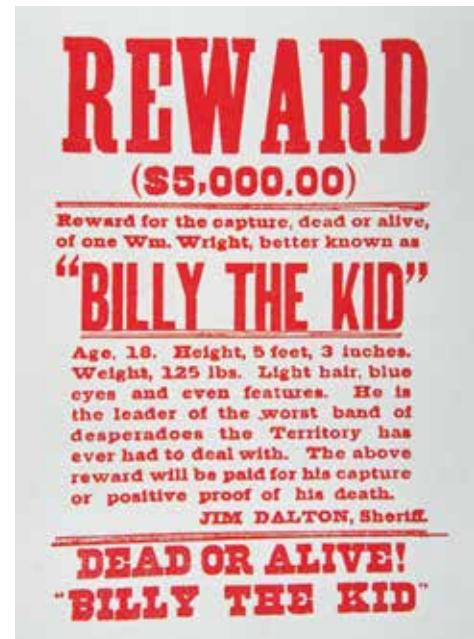
## Western Legends

Gone, maybe, but definitely not forgotten. It seemed that the more westerners settled down to the day-to-day business of making their living, the more easterners pictured the West as a place of gunfighters, rugged cowboys, and endless adventures—the “Wild West.” But few easterners ever saw the West. So where did they get their ideas? Partly from newspapers, which carried many stories about real-life western characters, stories that were often wildly exaggerated.

Take the outlaws Billy the Kid and Jesse James. Some eastern newspapers went way beyond the truth in their stories about these men. The newspapers made these outlaws seem clever and heroic, like Robin Hoods stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. In reality, they were neither. Billy the Kid was a skinny man who was not very skillful with a gun. He began his career of horse stealing, jailbreaking and killing at age fifteen. Jesse James, who had fought with the Confederates in the Civil War, was older when he started his life of crime. He held up banks, **stagecoaches**, and trains in broad daylight in half a dozen different states.

### Vocabulary

**stagecoach**, n.  
a horse-drawn vehicle used to carry passengers and mail along an established route



Billy the Kid was not the hero many eastern newspapers made him out to be.

## Shaping Opinions About the West

Some newspapers exaggerated for the same reasons some newspapers today exaggerate. Exciting stories sell newspapers.

The real story of the West was about the day-to-day struggle of farmers, ranchers, and others. It was also about Native Americans trying to hold on to their lands and their ways of life. However, those stories would not attract as many readers as would tales of outlaws and gunfights.

Newspapers weren't the only ones to profit from the myth of the Wild West. In the last part of the 1800s, the "dime novel" became very popular. Writers of these paperback adventure stories found that stories about the West sold well. For just ten cents, kids in Boston or Baltimore or Chicago—and their parents too—could

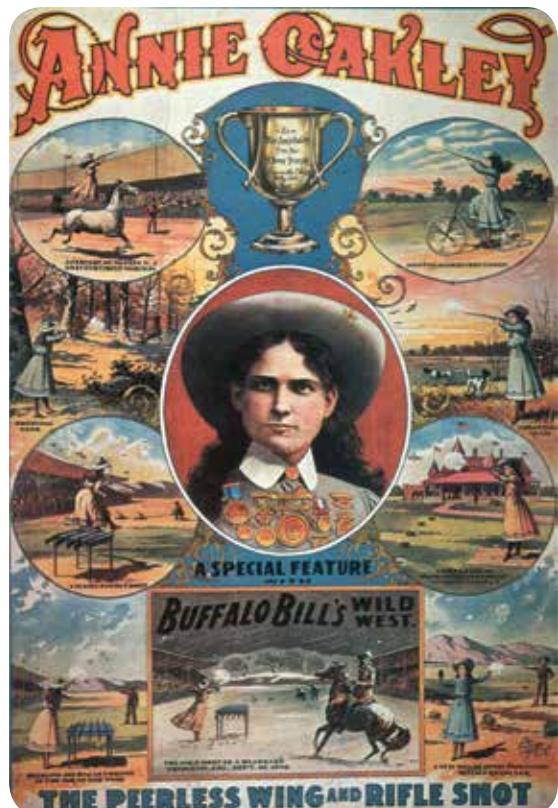
read exciting tales of cowboys and outlaws. Publishers produced more than 2,200 of these dime novels about fictional heroes, such as Arizona Joe, Denver Dan, and Lariat Lil. Even the stories about real people usually described made up or exaggerated events.

A new form of entertainment called the Wild West show also shaped ideas about the West. Even before the frontier had disappeared, some westerners realized they could make money by putting on shows about the West for eastern audiences. These shows became hugely popular. By the 1880s, there were about fifty such shows traveling throughout the East.

The most popular Wild West show belonged to William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Cody had worked as a Pony Express rider, a **scout**, a cowboy, and a buffalo hunter. Dramatic tales of his adventures became the subject of dime novels. In 1883, Cody created an outdoor western show that featured riding and shooting contests, a stagecoach robbery, and plenty of gunfighting.

### Vocabulary

**scout**, n. a person sent to observe an area and get information



Born Phoebe Ann Mosey, Annie Oakley became such an excellent markswoman that she was known as "Little Sure Shot."

Buffalo Bill's Wild West show included the famous Native American chief Sitting Bull and Annie Oakley, a young woman who shot a rifle with amazing accuracy. She herself was part of the myth, however, she had never been to the West. The show played to audiences of up to twenty thousand, twice a day.

After performing to big crowds in the United States for several years, Cody packed up the show, buffalo and all, and took it to Great Britain. There, he, Annie Oakley, and the others thrilled audiences of many thousands—including Queen Victoria herself!

Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West show continued to tour well into the early 1900s. But by that time, the real frontier had passed into history. Cody's show, along with the newspaper stories and dime novels, kept the legend of that frontier alive. Together, they gave audiences a taste, even though an exaggerated one, of life in the West.

Overall, newspaper articles, dime novels, and Wild West shows did contribute to a growing sense of American identity, one that was quite different from Europe. The West also held the promise of opportunity and escape from the increasingly industrialized eastern states.

# Chapter 7

# The United States Gains Alaska

**Northern Icebox** Before the Civil War, the United States had gained all of the Southwest from Mexico and half of Oregon from Great Britain. The nation now claimed land from one coast to the other. But the United States was not done expanding. Far to the north, and west of Canada, lay the huge area of land known as Alaska.

## The Big Question

What were the events leading to America's purchase of Alaska?

In 1867, no one cried, "Manifest Destiny!" No settlers pushed across Alaska's borders. In fact, few Americans had any interest in Alaska at all. Most knew less about Alaska than we know about Antarctica today.

How, then, did Alaska become part of the United States? The story begins in the early 1700s, when Russia sent a handful of explorers to the area and claimed the territory as its own. That's what European nations did in those days. They sent explorers to lands where Europeans had not been before. After a month or even a few days there, the explorers claimed the land for the country that had sent them. That's what Columbus did for Spain when he reached islands



Despite the beauty of the Alaskan landscape, few Americans were eager to move there.

in the Caribbean. That's what Henry Hudson did for the Netherlands in New York. The fact that other people already lived on these lands meant little to the explorers or their rulers.

The Russian government started a company to trade with native peoples in Alaska for fur. For the next century, the Russian company made a lot of money. Eventually, the overhunting of fur-bearing animals caused them to disappear and the company began to lose money.

At the same time, war between Russia and Great Britain seemed likely to happen. The Russians feared that if war broke out, they would lose Alaska to Great Britain. As they had once considered selling Alaska to the United States, it now seemed like a very good idea to do so.

In 1867, Czar Alexander II of Russia told Eduard de Stoeckl, his representative in the United States, to find out whether the Americans wanted to buy the territory.

"I won't take less than \$5 million," the czar told Stoeckl, "but see whether you can get more."

The American secretary of state at that time was William Seward. Seward told Stoeckl that he was interested. The two negotiated for days over a price. They finally settled at \$7.2 million. What followed then was quite unusual.

After checking back with the czar, Stoeckl stopped off at Seward's home one evening with the good news. The czar had approved the deal.



Czar Alexander II of Russia sold Alaska to the United States.

"Let us meet at your office in the Department of State tomorrow," Stoeckl suggested, "and write up the **treaty**."

Seward pushed away the card table in front of him and stood. "Why wait until tomorrow, Mr. Stoeckl?" he asked. "Let us make the treaty tonight."

"But your department is closed. You have no clerks, and my secretaries are scattered about the town," Stoeckl said.

"Never mind that," Seward said. "If you can [get your people] together, before midnight you will find me awaiting you at the department, which will be open and ready for business."

So, overnight, by the flickering oil lamps in Seward's office, the Russians and Americans wrote the treaty to buy Alaska. That March morning, at 4:00 a.m., they signed the Alaska Purchase.

Back in the United States, the Senate had to approve the treaty. Approval required a two-thirds majority vote. At the same time,

### Vocabulary

**treaty**, n. a formal agreement between two or more groups, especially countries



The United States bought Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million.

the House of Representatives had to vote to provide the money for the purchase. This led to debate in Congress and in the newspapers.

Not everyone agreed that the Alaska Purchase was a good idea. Some people called Alaska “Seward’s Polar Bear Garden” or “Seward’s Ice Box.” Some referred to the purchase as “Seward’s Folly.” A folly is a mistake, or a bad idea.

Most, though, realized that Seward had made a wise deal. They believed that Alaska held great potential. The timber might someday become valuable, and the fish were so plentiful that American fishermen could make a living from them for years. At less than two cents an acre, it seemed a very good bargain indeed. Both houses of Congress voted in its favor by large margins, and on October 18, 1867, the U.S. flag went up over Alaska. Alaska was part of the United States.

# Glossary

## B

**boom town, n.** a town that grows quickly in size and wealth (8)

**brand, v.** to mark with a symbol of ownership (27)

## C

**census, n.** a count of the number of people living in a certain area (49)

**credit, n.** a system of buying now and paying later (34)

## D

**ditch, n.** a narrow channel dug in the ground (42)

## E

**evaporation, n.** the process by which a liquid changes to a vapor or gas (42)

## F

**foolhardy, adj.** reckless; without care or caution (46)

## G

**graze, v.** to eat grass, crops, and other plants in a field (23)

**Great Plains, n.** a region of relatively flat grassland between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains (14)

## H

**hardship, n.** a difficulty (43)

**homestead, n.** a home and the land surrounding it (36)

## I

**immigrant, n.** a person from one country who moves to another country to live (4)

**irrigation, n.** a method of watering crops by moving water from a well, a river, or a lake to a place where it does not rain enough to grow crops (49)

## O

**open range, n.** land where cattle roam freely (25)

**ore, n.** rock from which metal can be obtained (47)

## P

**prairie, n.** grassland (14)

**precipitation, n.** water falling to Earth's surface as rain, hail, snow, sleet, and mist (32)

## R

**"railroad ties," (phrase)** wood planks used to support railroad tracks (14)

## S

**scout, n.** a person sent to observe an area and get information (52)

**stagecoach, n.** a horse-drawn vehicle used to carry passengers and mail along an established route (50)

**"stake a claim," (phrase)** to declare ownership of something, such as land (4)

**stampede, n.** the rushed movement of a large group of animals (28)

**swarm, v.** to gather or move together in a large group (8)

## T

**telegraph, n.** a machine that communicates messages over long distances by sending signals through wires (16)

**till, v.** to break up soil so crops can be planted (32)

**transcontinental, adj.** across a continent (12)

**treaty, n.** a formal agreement between two or more groups, especially countries (58)

## V

**"vigilante justice," (phrase)** also known as "frontier justice"; when ordinary citizens pursue and punish people accused of crimes instead of the police, other officials, or the courts (6)

## W

**"weather pattern," (phrase)** weather that repeats over a period of time (33)

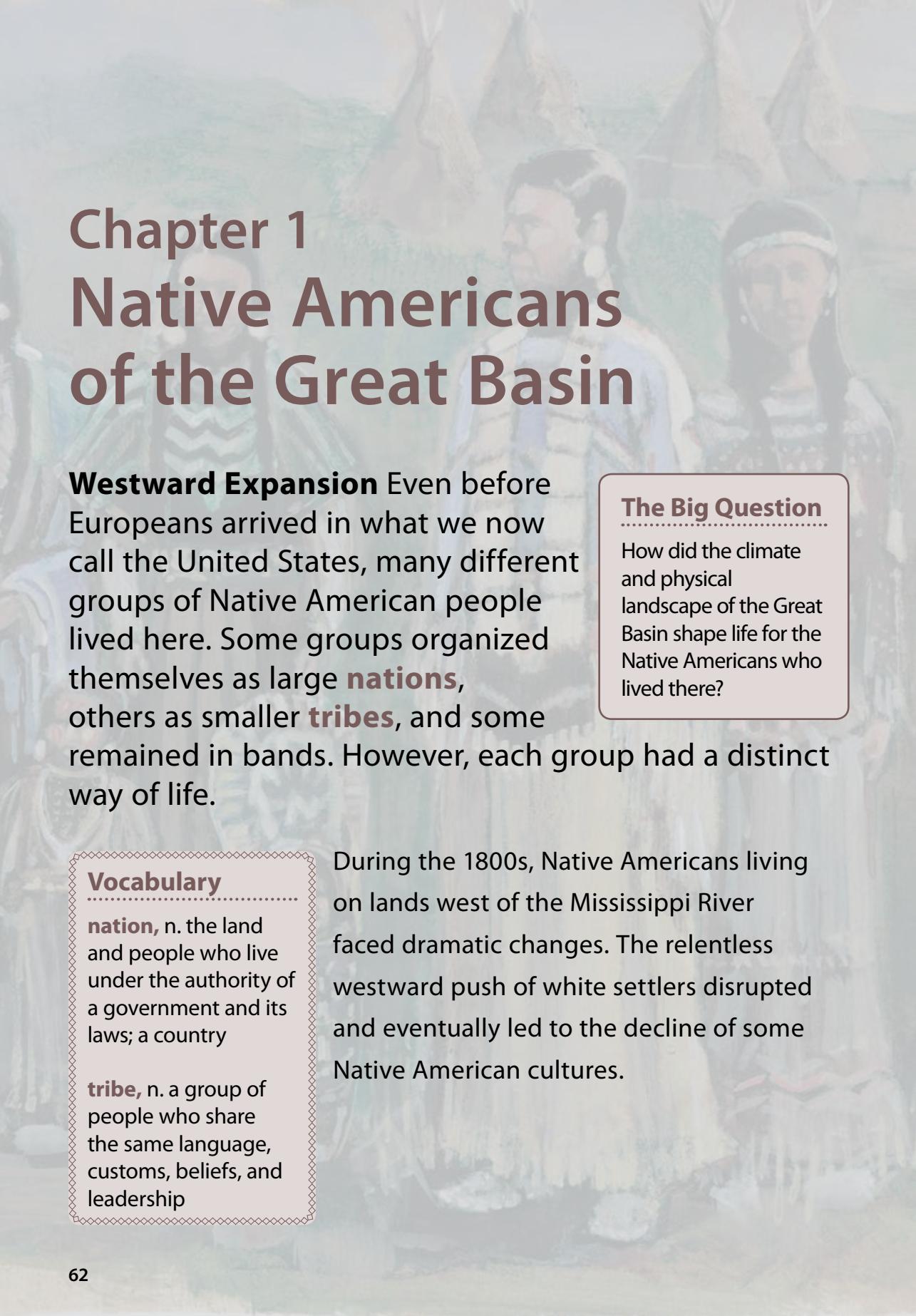
# Native Americans: Cultures and Conflicts

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1	<b>Native Americans of the Great Basin</b>	62
Chapter 2	<b>Native Americans of the Plateau</b>	72
Chapter 3	<b>Native Americans of the Plains</b>	80
Chapter 4	<b>Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest</b>	92
Chapter 5	<b>Broken Promises</b>	102
Chapter 6	<b>Tensions Mount</b>	114
Chapter 7	<b>The Indian Wars</b>	126
Chapter 8	<b>The Ghost Dance</b>	136
Glossary		144

**Native Americans: Cultures and Conflicts  
Reader**

Core Knowledge History and Geography™



# Chapter 1

# Native Americans of the Great Basin

**Westward Expansion** Even before Europeans arrived in what we now call the United States, many different groups of Native American people lived here. Some groups organized themselves as large **nations**, others as smaller **tribes**, and some remained in bands. However, each group had a distinct way of life.

## The Big Question

How did the climate and physical landscape of the Great Basin shape life for the Native Americans who lived there?

### Vocabulary

**nation**, n. the land and people who live under the authority of a government and its laws; a country

**tribe**, n. a group of people who share the same language, customs, beliefs, and leadership

During the 1800s, Native Americans living on lands west of the Mississippi River faced dramatic changes. The relentless westward push of white settlers disrupted and eventually led to the decline of some Native American cultures.



North America has long been home to many different Native American groups.

Who were some of these Native American groups encountered by white settlers? How did their lives change?

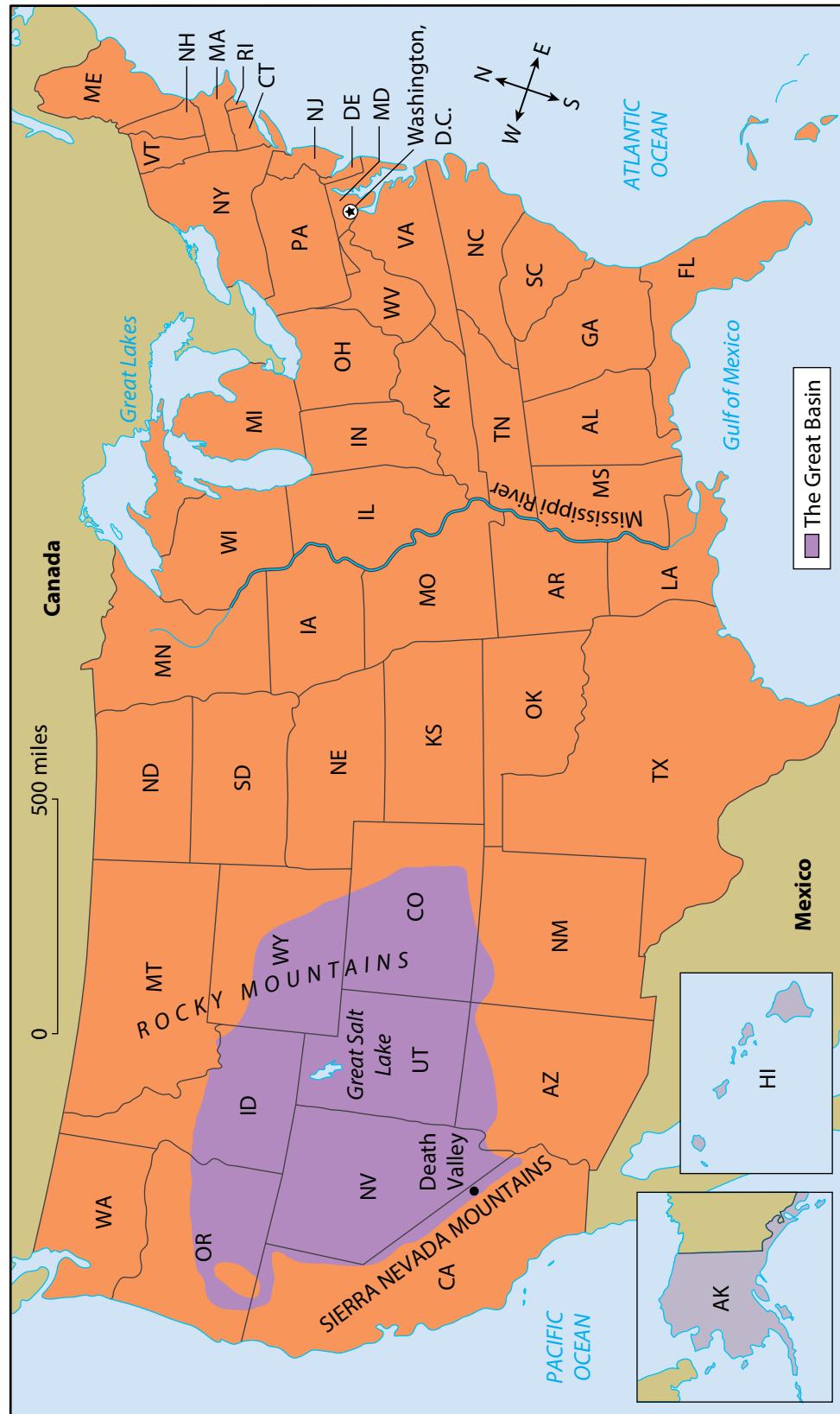
Let's start with the Native Americans who lived in the Great Basin of the American West.

## A Challenging Environment

The Great Basin is like a big bowl that encompasses what is now Nevada and parts of California, Idaho, Oregon, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. The "sides" of the bowl are the ranges of the Rocky Mountains to the east and the Sierra Nevada to the west. Inside the bowl is a desert with streams that rarely have water. When the sun beats down during the day, the basin becomes extremely hot; but nights can be very cool, even cold. Temperatures can reach 120°F on a summer's day and -20°F on a winter's night. The Great Basin includes Death Valley, the hottest place in the United States, and the desolate salt flats around the Great Salt Lake.

But much of the Great Basin is not quite so barren. With great resourcefulness, native peoples learned to adapt to the environment there. In many places, there are fruits and vegetables that can be eaten, including pine nuts, cactus fruits, and roots. There are many different kinds of animals as well, including marmots, beavers, voles, porcupines, mountain lions, rabbits, and rodents. Most of us today would not find these the most desirable sources of food, but if you have to live off the land of the Great Basin, you will eat just about anything you can catch.

## The Great Basin



The Great Basin encompasses Nevada and parts of California, Idaho, Oregon, and Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming. The Rocky Mountains are to the east, and the Sierra Nevada are to the west.

## Life in the Great Basin

The Great Basin has never been an easy place to live. Yet various Native American tribes have called it home, including the Bannocks, the Shoshone, the Utes, and the Paiutes (/pie\*yoots/). These cultures have endured for thousands of years.

Like other Native Americans, Great Basin peoples, such as the Paiutes, traditionally believed that mysterious natural forces or “powers” fill the world. Their **myths** explain how these powers affected their lives. According to these myths, the awesome things that people saw in nature—such as thunderstorms, wind, and snow—were living spiritual forces. Myths also told about animals named Wolf, Coyote, and Rabbit that could speak and act as people do. These mythical animals lived before humans, and created the world and its people. They taught people how to organize themselves into families and groups. They also taught people how to gather food and how to live **moral** lives.

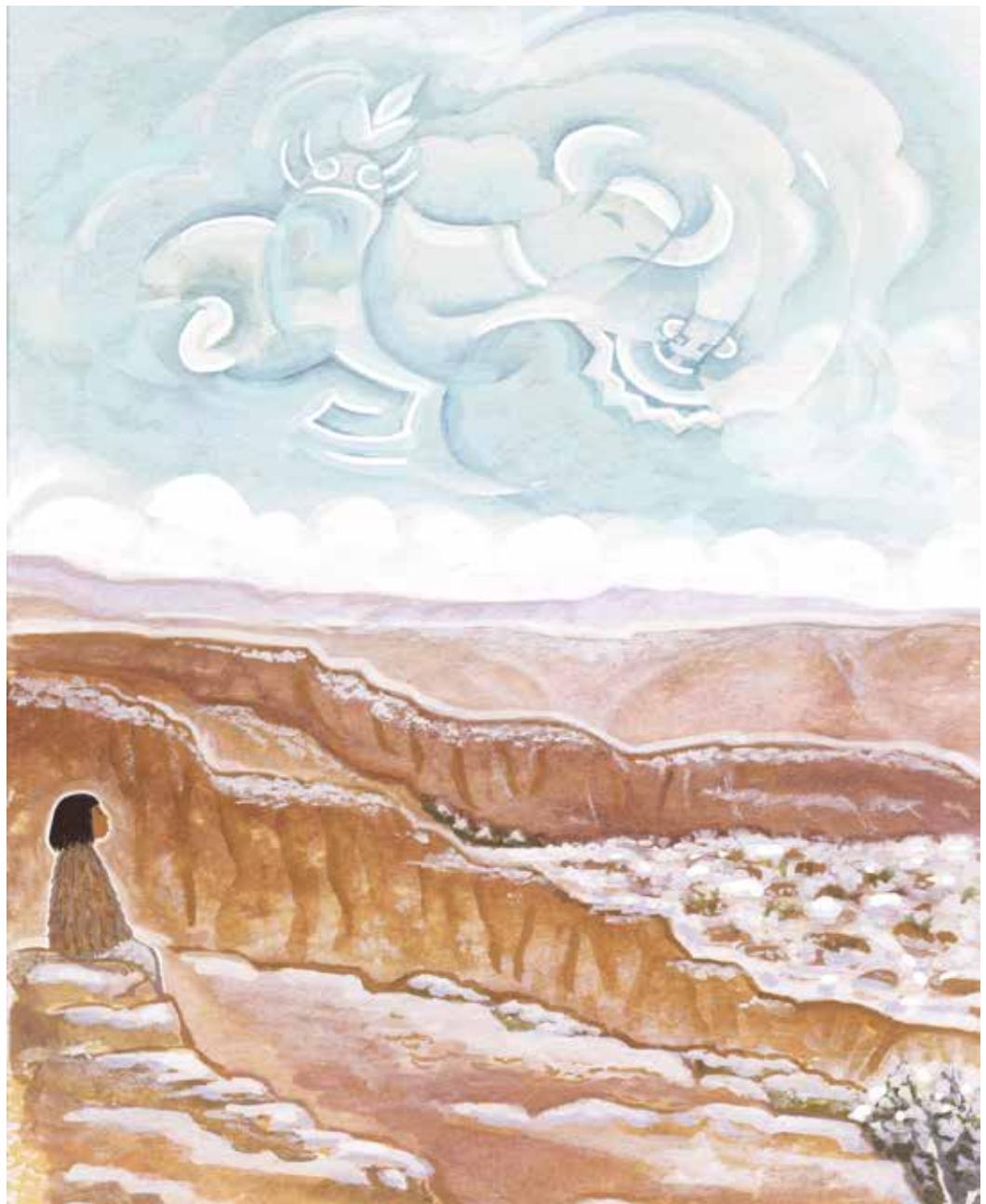
Traditionally, Paiutes and most other Native Americans believed that certain men and women had special abilities to communicate with the spirits in the natural world. They called such people **shamans**. Native Americans sought a shaman’s guidance when they were ill or when their people were hungry.

### Vocabulary

**myth**, n. a traditional story, often concerning the early history of a people or explaining some natural or social occurrence, and typically involving supernatural beings or events

**moral**, adj. relating to ideas of right and wrong

**shaman**, n. a Native American leader who is believed to have special powers



Native Americans traditionally believed that the natural world is governed by spirits.

The Paiutes and other Great Basin native peoples lived in groups of parents, children, aunts or uncles and their families, and grandparents. These small groups hunted game and looked for edible plants. They had no agriculture. In some places, though,

they could get enough water to **irrigate** naturally growing plants in order to increase their yield.

Hunting and gathering were vital parts of Paiute life. They had to cover a huge amount of territory in their never-ending quest for food. But Great Basin peoples never wandered aimlessly. They knew the places where food was likely to be found in different seasons. They returned to these places year after year.

Until the Paiutes got guns and horses from the Spanish in the late 1700s, they depended on **corrals**, clubs, and knives in their hunts. (Bows and arrows were useful only for killing larger animals, such as antelope.) The men would build a corral by stringing nets between large cacti. Then they would patiently wait or chase an animal into the trap. When the animal was caught, women would quickly kill it and skin it.

Paiute women and children looked for as many edible plants as possible. They also looked for insects and small rodents. They never overlooked poisonous vegetation that could, with special treatment, be eaten. It took great skill to tell what could be safely eaten. Because women provided so much of the food that Native Americans ate, they were considered as important as men in traditional Great Basin societies.

Great Basin people found many creative uses beyond food for the animals they hunted. For example, they used a jackrabbit's muscles

## Vocabulary

**irrigate**, v. to water crops by moving water from a well, a river, or a lake to a place where it does not rain enough to grow crops

**corral**, n. a fenced area for animals

to tie sharpened stones to arrows. Its bones became needles and knives. From rabbit fur, Native American women made garments for the cold winters. In winters, several groups would live together in camps in simple shelters placed close together.

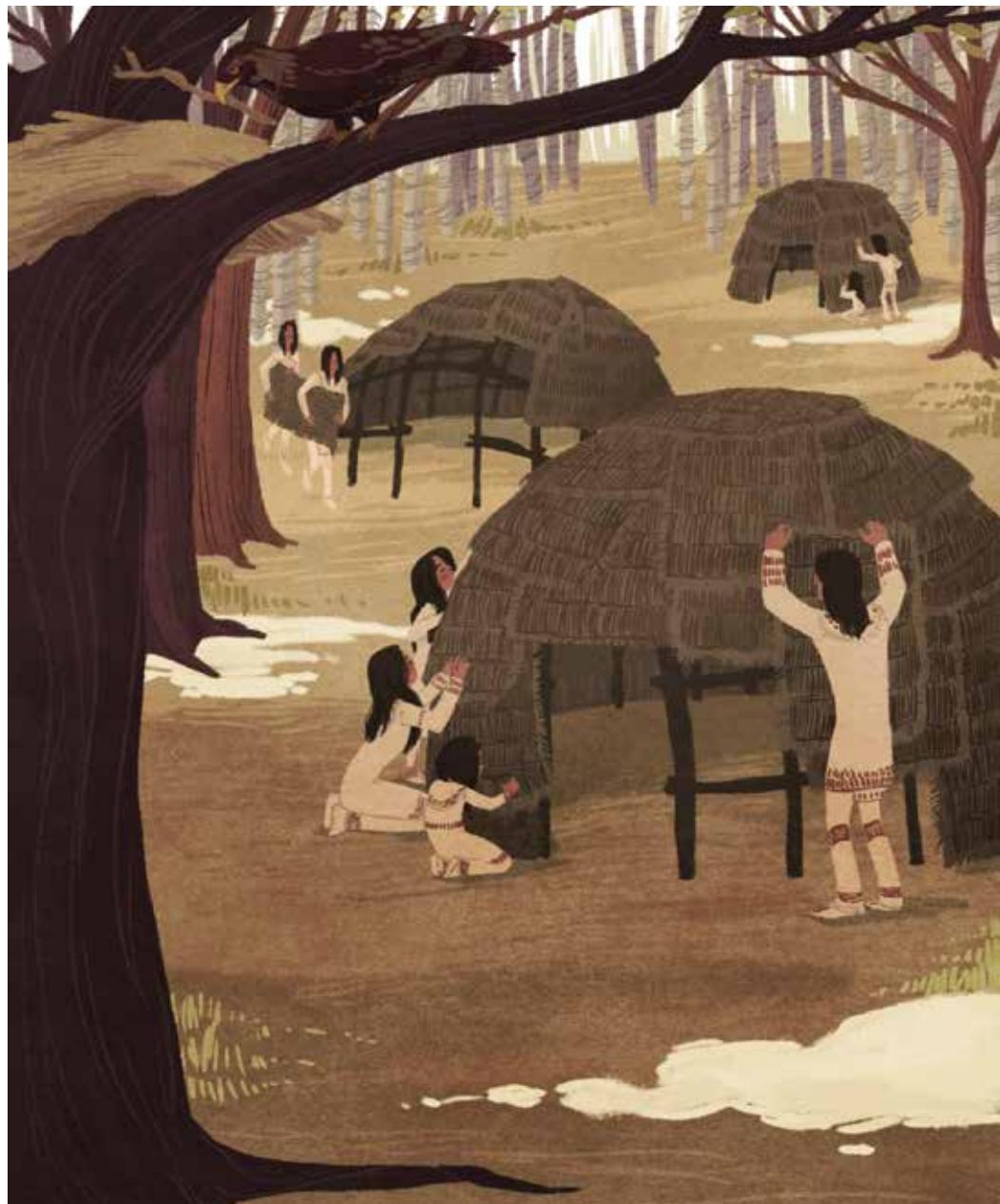
## Harvest Time

If you could go back in time and join the Native Americans of the Great Basin, the best time to be there would probably have been the fall. That was when larger numbers of small groups came together. They shared stories about the past year; they danced and played; they looked for husbands or wives; and they hunted jackrabbits. However, the main purpose of their gathering was to harvest pine nuts. A few areas of green forest meant that pine nuts could be found.

Harvesting pine nuts was not easy. The Native Americans had to gather just before the nuts ripened. If they were a day or two late, the pinecones would already have opened and animals would have eaten the nuts.

To get to the pine nuts, the men pulled pinecones off the trees. Women and children filled hundreds of baskets, made by the women, with pinecones. Then they roasted the pinecones, which helped open them up so that the nuts could be shaken out. They roasted the nuts until their fuzzy shells could be cracked and the tasty inner kernels released.

They saved a large part of the harvest for the cold winter months. Then the nuts were ground into flour for bread and mixed with water to make soup.



Groups of Great Basin Native Americans gathered in the fall.

As you have read, the Great Basin's environment forced Native Americans, such as the Paiutes, to make use of every possible resource. The environment also taught the native peoples to hold animals, plants, and natural forces in great respect and to keep their social organization as simple as possible.



Gathering pine nuts was hard work that required the help of men, women, and children.

Families were seldom large, nor was the Native American population of the Great Basin ever very large. It was a harsh existence, but groups such as the Paiutes did whatever they had to do in order to survive. Their myths and their traditions gave them strict rules of morality or conduct—all shaped by the natural conditions under which they lived. They carefully taught these rules to their children. They also taught their children the complex skills needed to find food, water, and shelter in the Great Basin.

# Chapter 2

# Native Americans of the Plateau

**Living by the Seasons** Just a few hundred miles north of where the Paiutes lived is the Plateau region. This region includes portions of the present-day states of Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California, Montana, and areas in Canada.

## The Big Question

What does “living by the seasons” reveal about life in the Plateau region for Native Americans?

Native American tribes who lived in this region included the Kutenais (/koot\*en\*ayz/), the Walla Wallas (/wah\*lah/wah\*lahz/), the Coeur d’Alenes (/kur/del\*aynz/), the Cayuses (/kye\*yoos\*uz/), and the Nez Perce (/nez/puhrs/).

### Vocabulary

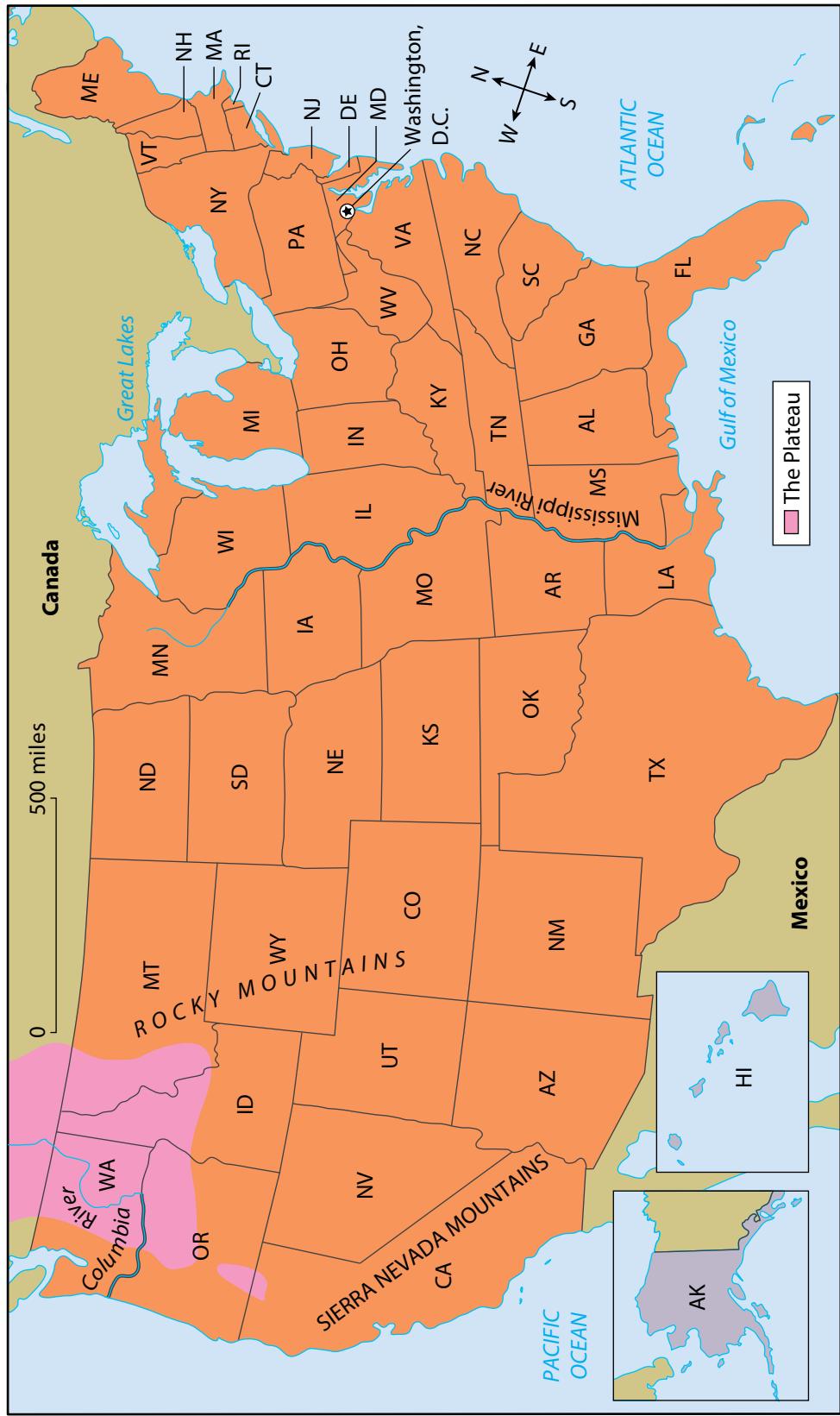
**hunter-gatherers**,  
n. small groups of  
people who feed  
themselves by  
hunting animals and  
gathering plants

The weather in the Plateau region is similar to that in the Great Basin—hot summers and cold winters. But the Plateau region has more water and more abundant plants and animals. Like the Great Basin Native Americans, Plateau peoples were **hunter-gatherers**. They traveled from place to place according



Plateau peoples were hunter-gatherers who lived off the land.

## The Plateau Region



The Plateau region includes parts of the present-day states of Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California, Montana, and areas in Canada.

to the availability of food during different seasons. Also like the Paiutes, Plateau Native Americans were highly skilled in living off the land. Men, women, and children all had special jobs to perform as groups worked together to find food. Like all other native groups, Plateau Native Americans respected and honored nature. They believed it had spiritual powers or forces. The Plateau people, however, could draw on a much wider range of food sources compared to Native Americans of the Great Basin.

In 1805, about six thousand Nez Perce or Nimipu (/nee\*me\*poo/) Native Americans lived in the Plateau area. Here is how you would have spent a year had you lived with them long ago.

## Spring

The snow has not yet melted, and all the dried food the Nez Perce have saved for the winter is gone. Now they must seek food. Those in the large villages break into smaller groups. Some Nez Perce put on **snowshoes** to hunt deer, bear, or caribou in the valleys. Others paddle their canoes down the Columbia River to catch the first salmon of the year as the fish travel upriver to spawning, or breeding, areas. Here, salmon is not only extremely important as a source of food, it is also sacred.

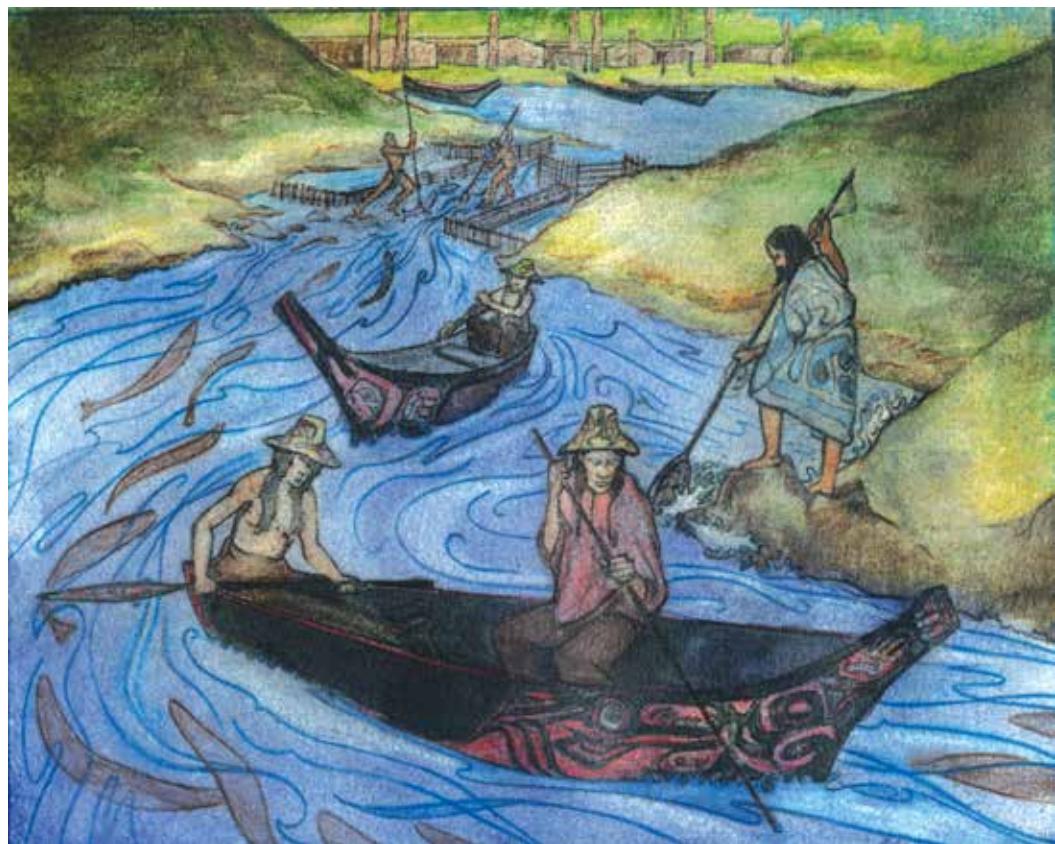
### Vocabulary

**snowshoe**, n. a lightweight frame that lets a person walk on snow without sinking

The Native Americans of the Plateau depend on the salmon to live. They eat it fresh. They also dry large amounts of it to trade and to eat during the months when they leave the rivers and head for the mountainsides. Salmon is so important that every man, woman,

and child who is not sick or hunting deer and caribou joins in the salmon hunt. For the Nez Perce this is more than just a hunt. It is a religious ritual. Thousands of Nez Perce gather in river villages to catch and process these fish.

A shaman wades gingerly into the river. From the gurgling waters, he chooses a few salmon and catches them with his hands. These salmon are then cooked. Everyone eats a little piece and shares in the first catch of the salmon season. Then, the bones from the salmon are placed back into the river. The Nez Perce perform this ceremony to pay tribute to the river spirit and the salmon spirit. They believe that this ceremony will ensure that the salmon will return next year.



The Nez Perce depended on salmon to live.

Then the hunt begins in earnest. Some Nez Perce fish with a hook and line; others try to spear salmon with **harpoons** or try to catch them with traps and nets. Afterwards, the people work together to clean the fish and hang them on racks to dry so they will not spoil.

### Vocabulary

**harpoon**, n. a spear used to hunt fish or whales

**bitterroot**, n. a plant that grows in dry areas and has roots that can be eaten

## Summer

By the middle of summer, the Nez Perce break up into smaller groups and move from the river villages to the mountainsides. There, they search for wild carrots, onions, **bitterroot**, celery, and parsnips. Some young Nez Perce search the bushes for huckleberries and blueberries. While the men are off on long hunting and trading journeys, women have the main responsibility to find, harvest, and preserve plant foods. The life of the entire group depends on the women drying enough food for the winter months.

## Autumn and Winter

In late summer and early fall, the Nez Perce build special homes to use in winter. They dig a pit about five feet deep, and anywhere from ten to forty feet wide. Next, they build a cone-shaped frame above the pit, covering it with brush and earth. The builders leave a hole in the top that allows smoke to escape. That hole is also used for entering and exiting the earth lodge. Residents climb in and out of these warm, cleverly designed homes on ladders or notched logs. These structures are called pithouses.

The pithouse is the perfect place to sit by the fire and listen to the older people tell stories and myths. In these stories and myths, animals, plants, rocks, rivers, and even stars come to life. **Coyote**, the “trickster,” is a popular character. He is always getting into trouble or into odd situations. The Plateau Indians often tell stories about Coyote to teach lessons to the children.

### Vocabulary

**coyote**, n. an animal similar to a wolf, but smaller

During the winter, baskets are made, and nets are mended or woven. These will be used the following spring—again, for the salmon. This is a time to gather energy while waiting for another spring.

## A Coyote Tale

Here is a tale a Plateau child might have heard about one Coyote tricking another Coyote:

Two Coyotes were crossing a field, but one had not met the other before. They heard a person yell, “There’s a Coyote in the field!” The first Coyote turned to the other and told him to run! They both started to run for the trees when they heard the man yell, “And there goes another one!”

Finally, both Coyotes made it to the cover of the trees and introduced themselves. “I never saw you before. My name’s Wanderer. I am a Coyote like you.”

The other Coyote looked at him oddly and said, “My name’s Sleek, but I am not a Coyote like you.”

"Yes you are," said Wanderer.

"Oh, no I am not," replied Sleek.

"Look, my friend, you're confused. Your ears are like mine, your tail is like mine, your fur is the same as mine, our snouts are the same, everything is the same. You are just like me, and we are both Coyotes."



Coyote

"Listen, let's run across the field again and you will see," challenged Sleek.

So off they ran. First went Wanderer and again the man yelled. "There goes that Coyote!" Then Sleek took off, and the farmer yelled, "And there goes another one!"

When the two Coyotes reached the other side of the field, they ducked into the woods. Wanderer turned to Sleek and said, "There! Didn't you hear the man? He called us both Coyotes."

Sleek looked disappointed with his confused friend and said, "Yes, I heard the man call you a Coyote, but he called me 'Another One'."

That just goes to show that we should not let others tell us who we are.

# Chapter 3

# Native Americans of the Plains

**From Farmers to Hunters** Think very carefully about this: What are two things you could not live without—without them, your life would change completely? Did you say a house? Smartphone? Computer? Car? Keep your answers in mind as you read this chapter.

## The Big Question

What impact did the introduction of the horse have on the way of life for the people of the Plains?



The Plains region is mostly flat and dotted with trees.

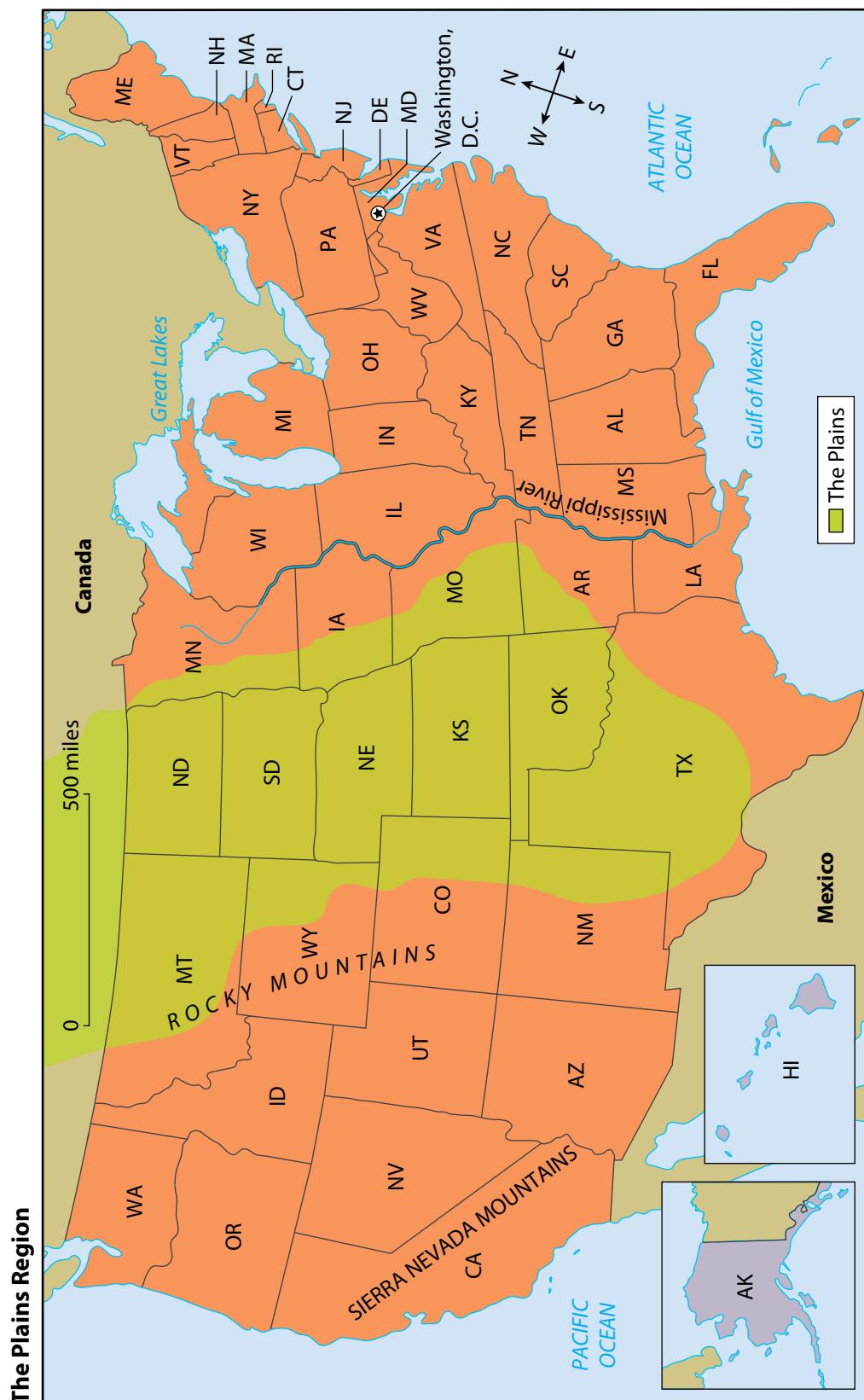
As you have learned, the Native Americans of the Great Basin and Plateau regions were hunter-gatherers. They traveled to find food and take advantage of the weather and seasons. Mostly, they traveled by foot or sometimes by canoe. They crossed mountains, valleys, gorges, rivers, and hillsides.

Many of the Native Americans living in the Plains region, however, were *not* hunter-gatherers. At least, they weren't at first. The grasslands of the Plains extend from central Canada south to Mexico and from the midwestern United States westward to the Rockies. The Plains are flat and dotted with trees. The Native Americans who lived on this land were farmers for centuries. They grew most of their own food. They also gathered wild fruits and nuts and occasionally hunted bison (a type of buffalo)—always on foot. At the end of a hunting trip, they returned to the same home they lived in year-round.

Some Plains people, like the Hidatsas, Mandans, and Arikaras in North Dakota, always kept their agricultural way of life. The Missouri River gave enough water for them to remain successful farmers. But around 1750, other Plains peoples' lives changed forever because a new animal became available to them—the horse.

## Horses

Ancestors of horses once existed on this continent, but they had been wiped out during the Ice Age. So the horse was unknown to North and South American native peoples until Spanish soldiers invaded Mexico in the 1500s. They brought horses with them.



The Plains region extends from central Canada south to Mexico and from the midwestern United States westward to the Rockies.

The Spaniards lost some of their horses, and these animals multiplied into wild herds that migrated north to the Plains.

The arrival of horses on the Great Plains changed American history. How? Remember the two things that you could not live without? Well, for the native peoples of the Plains, those two things were the horse and the bison. To learn about these two animals and their roles in the lives of these Native Americans is to understand a major part of American history.



Horses changed the way Native Americans on the Plains lived.

## Bison Become King

Remember how salmon were very important to the Plateau Native Americans? Well, with more than thirty million bison roaming North America, bison were equally important on the Plains. To the peoples of the Plains—such as the Arapahos (/uh\*rap\*uh\*hohz/), Blackfoot, Cheyenne (/shye\*an/), Osages (/oh\*sayjz/), and Sioux (/soo/)—bison were the source of excellent and plentiful food. But the bison provided more than food.



The Native Americans of the Plains once hunted bison the way Paiutes hunted rabbits—by building corrals and herding a few animals into them. It was tiring and very hard work on foot. Many people were needed to bring down just one animal.

When the horse arrived, everything changed. With horses, the bison hunters could supply hundreds of people with all they needed. During such a hunt, one man could kill one or two bison, and a skilled hunter could take down as many as four or five. Twenty skilled hunters, then, could kill up to eighty bison *in one day!*

The Plains peoples, though, never hunted more bison than they could use. They thanked the Great Spirit for the abundance of food and never thought of wasting it.

## Hunting for Bison

Plains peoples quickly became highly skilled riders. The most widely used hunting method was known as the chase. Once a herd was found, each rider rode his horse toward it. When the bison realized the danger, they scattered. Each Native American rider would bear down on a single animal.

When he was as close as possible to the bison, the rider shot an arrow, aiming just behind the last rib. That is where a bison was most vulnerable. Often, though, the first arrow only slowed the animal down. But the horse could keep up the chase, and after a few more shots, the bison was dead.

As skilled riders and hunters, Plains Native Americans could ride long distances for food. They could carry many things with them,

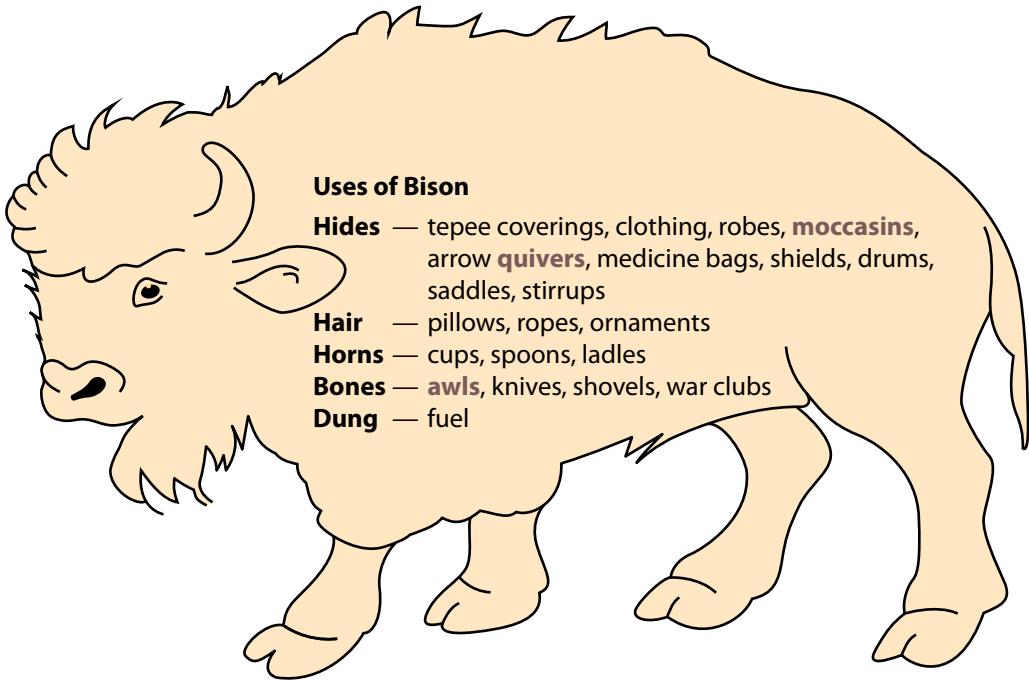


Plains people learned to be skilled riders and how to use the bow and arrow to hunt bison.

including food, **tepees**, tools, clothing, and cookware. They did not have to stay in one place and raise crops. They stopped being farmers and became primarily hunters and traders. Plains Native Americans now had extra food and goods made from bison. They could trade those things for items they did not have. These things included metals, beads, and tools. Also traded were agricultural products, which, as we have seen, some Plains people continued to raise and sell. At first, they traded with other Native American groups. Later, they began to trade with European traders.

### Vocabulary

**tepee**, n. a cone-shaped tent used by Native American groups living on the Plains



#### Uses of Bison

- Hides** — tepee coverings, clothing, robes, **moccasins**, arrow **quivers**, medicine bags, shields, drums, saddles, stirrups
- Hair** — pillows, ropes, ornaments
- Horns** — cups, spoons, ladles
- Bones** — **awls**, knives, shovels, war clubs
- Dung** — fuel

and eventually settlers who had begun to appear on the frontier. From these people, Native Americans acquired another item that changed their lives—the gun. Guns made killing bison even easier.

## Horses and War

The horse brought much good to the native peoples of the Plains. It has been said that the horse did not just *change* the Native Americans of the Plains—it *created* them. On the other hand, horses now made it easier for them to wage war on each other.

Before the horse, Plains farmers were very busy people. They cleared the land, tilled the soil, planted seeds, watered plants,

#### Vocabulary

**moccasin**, n. a soft leather shoe made from animal skins

**quiver**, n. a case for holding arrows

**awl**, n. a sharp, pointed tool used for sewing and to make holes

and harvested and preserved the crops. The coming of the horse did not change the Plains peoples' basic value systems. It did, however, bring them into conflict with more distant rivals. Native groups waged war for many reasons. They fought wars to drive rivals away from good hunting grounds, to keep them from taking too much food, and to steal horses. They also fought wars to control trade and gain access to resources.

Tribes and individual Native American warriors also fought simply for glory. They fought battles not just to kill enemies, but to shame them with displays of superior bravery and skill.

The word *coup* (/coo/) is a French word that means touch or blow, as in striking someone. Often, the object in fighting was to *count coup*. Warriors wanted to see who could achieve the bravest deeds and win the greatest glory. Warriors' reputations depended on how many coups they could count. Striking an enemy with a stick, taking his gun, or stealing his horse were bigger coups than killing him.

## **From Childhood to Adulthood**

Native American boys listened to stories of how warriors gained glory. Parents and other respected adults spoke of tribal heroes and traditions, passing on their strong sense of justice and honorable behavior. Playing with and learning to use bows and arrows, learning to handle horses, and hunting small game prepared boys for adult life. Accompanying adult males on

bison hunts, joining war parties, and going through **initiation rites** marked a teenager's gradual entrance into manhood. And, there were always tribal ceremonies celebrating their accomplishments.

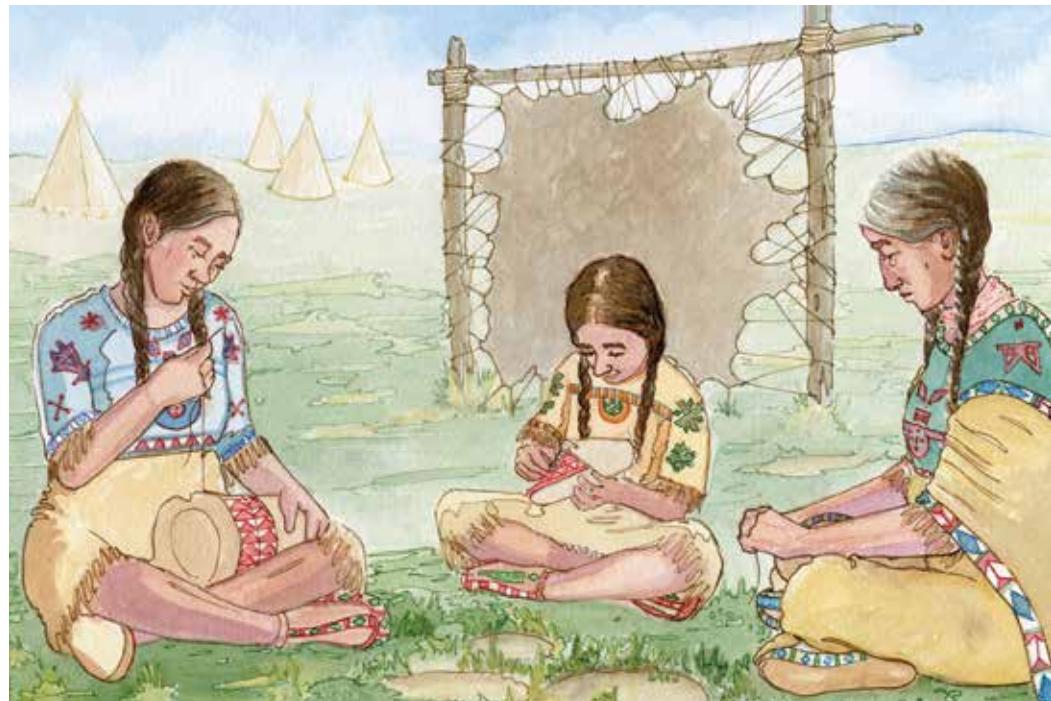
As adults, men continued to display their skill, bravery, and **fortitude** in hunts, rituals, and warfare.

Like all Native American groups, Plains peoples depended on women's skills, too. Women turned bison hides into fur robes and tepees. They gathered edible plants and, among agricultural tribes, took care of crops. They cooked, sewed, and did beadwork.

### Vocabulary

**"initiation rite,"**  
(phrase) an act  
that a person must  
complete to join a  
group

**fortitude, n.**  
strength or  
determination



Women played important roles in the lives of Plains peoples.

They were largely responsible for moving encampments during the hunting season. Girls learned these skills from their mothers and other older women. And, like boys, they had their own rituals to mark their coming of age. Women's contributions were so important that in many Plains tribes (and other Native American societies), people traced their descent not from their father's ancestors but from their mother's ancestors.

# Chapter 4

# Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest

**Native Americans of the Northwest** Now, let's visit an area and a Native American group very different from the ones we have read about so far. We are heading to the Pacific Northwest. This region extends from southern Alaska and along Canada's coastline to Washington, Oregon, and northern California.

The Native Americans who lived in the Pacific Northwest included the Tlingits (/tlɪhg\*gihts/), Salishes (/say\*lihsh\*uz/), Haidas (/hye\*dahz/), Kwakwaka'wakw (/kwak\*wak\*ya\*wak/), and other tribes. These people were hunter-gatherers too, but of a different kind.

## Land of Forest and Rivers

Pacific Northwest peoples lived in a rugged, windy region along the coast. There were majestic mountains on the eastern side and the crashing waves of the Pacific Ocean on the western side.

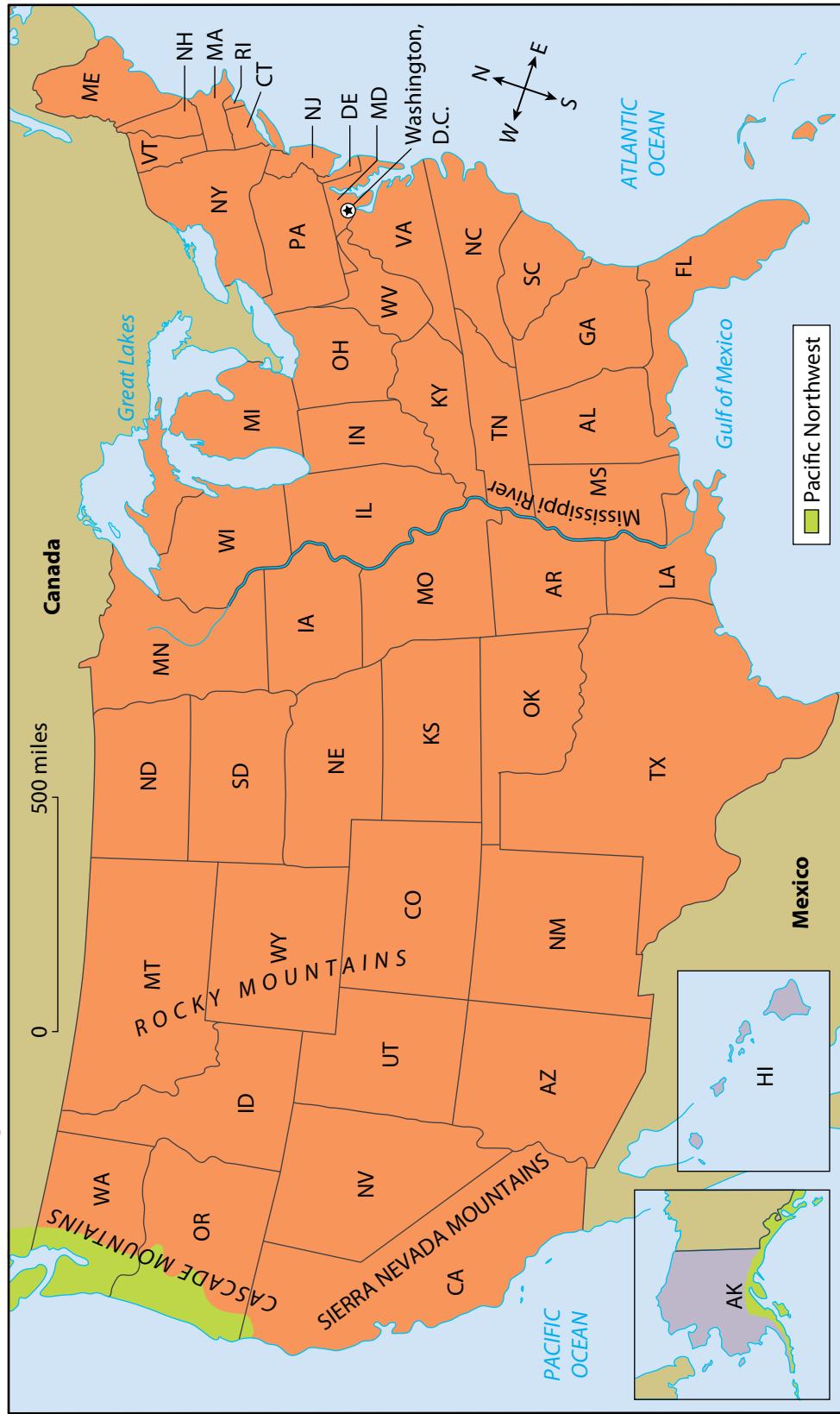
### The Big Question

How would you describe life for the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest?



The Pacific Northwest has a rugged coastline.

## The Pacific Northwest Region



The Pacific Northwest region extends from southern Alaska and along Canada's coastline to Washington, Oregon, and northern California.

This area is about one hundred miles wide and one thousand miles long. It has more than two thousand miles of jagged shoreline.

In the Pacific Northwest, the weather is mild. The area does not have the temperature extremes that occur in the Great Basin, Plateau, and Plains regions. The temperatures generally range from 35°F to 45°F in January and from 55°F to 65°F in July.

The Pacific Northwest is also moist. In some areas, 150 inches of rain falls every year. That is enough rain to make a twelve-foot-deep swimming pool overflow! All those rainstorms, along with fogs and moist winds, make for lush forests that teem with plants and animals. Redwood and cedar trees tower many stories above the land. These trees provided the Pacific Northwest Native Americans with building supplies and other natural resources.

The Native Americans of the moist, lush, and relatively densely populated Pacific Northwest got so much food from their environment that they never had to develop agriculture. Their tribes were sharply divided into chiefs, nobles, ordinary people, and enslaved people (usually war captives). They were the most status-conscious of all Native Americans. The society and



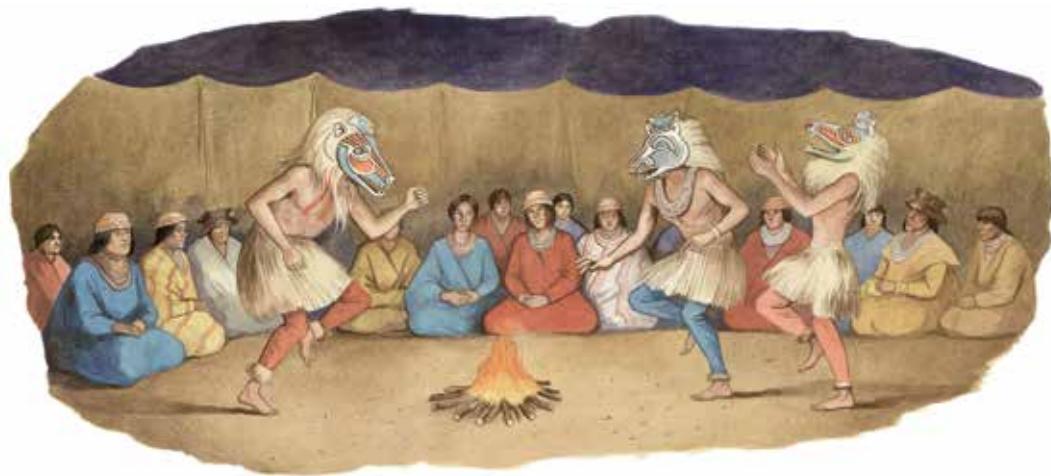
The Pacific Northwest is rich in forests.

value systems of these peoples revolved around acquiring and displaying property. And giving it away! The more things that a Native American could give away, the more respect and aid he would be owed. The best way to acquire power through giving things away was to hold potlatches and erect totem poles.

## Potlatches and Totem Poles

Potlatches were great ceremonies that lasted days, even weeks. Anywhere from fifty to several hundred people might attend. There were dances, stories, games, singing, gift-giving, and food galore! The purpose was not just to have fun, but to strengthen the bonds that held Pacific Northwest Native American society together and to promote the wealth and success of the host.

Some potlatches honored a dead chief; some celebrated a new house. In fact, Pacific Northwest Native Americans celebrated many different life events, just like people do today: marriage, a child's birth, the naming of a child, coming of age, a wedding



A potlatch was a long celebration that strengthened ties among Pacific Northwest Native Americans.

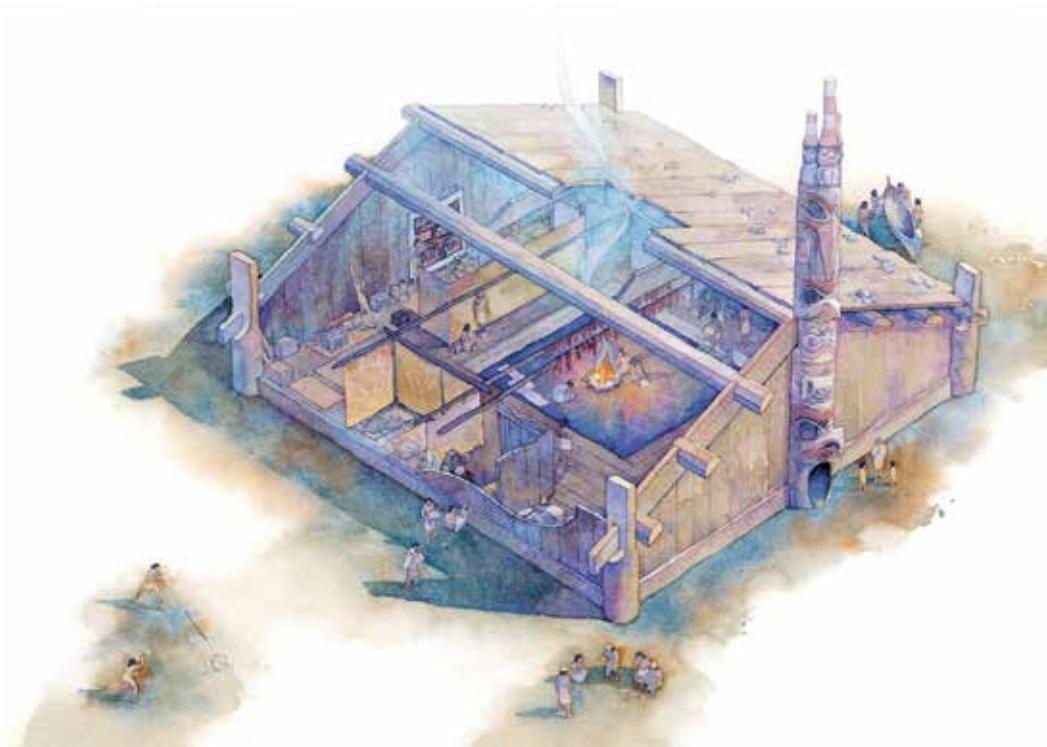
anniversary. Let's imagine we have been invited to a potlatch to celebrate a marriage.

We approach this village from the ocean side. Lining the coast are large houses, called longhouses, built of cedar planks. The village stretches for more than a mile and is home to about nine hundred people. This is unusual, though. Most villages are home to between thirty and fifty Native Americans who live in only one or two longhouses.

As we walk from the beach, we notice that these houses are beautifully painted with signs and symbols of ravens, bears, eagles, wolves, or other animals. These animals are symbols, or **totems**, for different families.

### Vocabulary

**totem**, n. a plant or animal that is a respected symbol in Native American society



Many people lived together in a longhouse. Totem poles tell the legends and histories of Pacific Northwest Native Americans.

Each group of Pacific Northwest Native Americans is a member of one of two totems: Raven or Eagle. Within each totem, there are various **clans**. If you belong to the Raven totem, then you could be a member of a Frog, Goose, Owl, Salmon, or Sea Lion clan. If you belong to the Eagle totem, you could be a member of a Bear, Shark, Whale, or Wolf clan.

### Vocabulary

**clan**, n. a group of families claiming a common ancestor

**emblem**, n. a symbol

**ancestry**, n. the people who were in your family in past times

Native Americans carve their tribal legends and family histories into tall posts of cedar wood, called totem poles. The totem pole serves as the **emblem** of a family or clan and as a reminder of its **ancestry**. The symbols represent not only a clan but also the power and characteristics of individuals in the clan. Each clan's totem has a history, and each totem has power based on a particular animal's abilities. For example, the bear represents strength and courage, and the wolf symbolizes perseverance and guardianship. An individual in these clans is thought to possess the same qualities as the totem.

This potlatch took more than a year to prepare. Why? First of all, potlatches display treasures and important mementos of the party-giver's family. So many



Signs of wealth were displayed at potlatches.

things needed to be gathered—things that showed wealth, such as blankets, robes, tools, and plaques of pounded, decorated **copper**. Elaborate songs recounting family history needed to be created and rehearsed—and that took time. Food had to be prepared. Most important, the totem pole had to be designed, sculpted, and painted.

### Vocabulary

**copper**, n. a type of metal

## Welcoming the Guests

Standing before one of the larger, nicer houses is the groom's father. He wears his best clothes: an intricately woven goat-hair blanket and a hat decorated with ermine. We know he is an important member of the Raven totem because a raven is painted on the brim of his hat. He also carries a fancy staff decorated with mother-of-pearl and whale bone. He is ready and eager to greet his guests.

As a drum starts beating, we turn around and see many canoes offshore. The canoes are decorated with Bear, Wolf, and Eagle totems. The groom's father greets his guests with a flowery and elaborate speech, and then the guests, in turn, sing their own songs and make their own speeches. One by one the guests come ashore, in order of rank. The richest man comes first, then the next richest, and so on.

We enter the father's house, where he has built a fire so large that sparks fly through the hole in the roof. Some of the beams in the ceiling are scorched. Once again, this is for show. What the host is really saying is, "I am rich enough to build such a large fire that my house could burn down and it wouldn't matter!"

More speeches follow. The host talks about his family and its history.

The host then has people carry in a canoe filled with food and sets it before the guests. The guests enjoy the food offered to them.

On the second day, the chief breaks up his best canoe and burns it. This is his way of saying, "I am so rich I don't need this canoe. I can afford to have another one built." The eating and flaunting of wealth go on for a few days, leading up to the two great moments of a potlatch: the "giving away" (which is what the word *potlatch* means) and the raising of the totem.

To the chief ranking second to him, the host gives six thousand blankets, while people of low rank get only strips from torn blankets. Then, guests give gifts to the host. Giving and accepting gifts requires both parties to help each other in the future.

## Raising the Totem

Now, we are led outside to the front of the house. Lying on its side, but covered, is the potlatch totem pole. The totem pole tells a story in pictures about the party giver. A number of people uncover the pole and raise it with rope until its base rests in a hole.

Everyone admires its beauty. The totem pole tells the story of the host's son's marriage. Because the host and his son belong to a Raven clan, a raven totem is carved at the top. The wife is from a Wolf clan, and so the raven is shown perched on the wolf's back.

More stories are told on this totem pole. It will stand for many years to honor this marriage. Then it will rot away. The Raven chief does not care. When it does rot away, he will host another potlatch and raise another totem pole.

Now you have some idea of the cultures and traditions of Native Americans in the western United States.

# Chapter 5

# Broken Promises

**Government Policy** Uneasy relations between Americans and Native Americans can be traced all the way back to the days when the first European settlers arrived. Already in those early days, there were successes and failures.

## The Big Question

What challenges did Native Americans face as America developed and expanded?

Many people are familiar with the story of how the Native Americans helped the Pilgrims through their first winter in Massachusetts. But for each example of cooperation, there were many violent clashes, including wars and slaughters. Native Americans traded with the newcomers, but trade also caused intertribal rivalries and battles among Native American peoples, as well as between Europeans and their Native American allies.

An additional problem was the fact that Native Americans often could not resist the germs that Europeans and Africans brought to the Americas and spread from their settlements and trading posts.



There were many instances of cooperation and conflict between European settlers and Native Americans.

Disease killed many native peoples of the eastern United States, though tribes such as the Haudenosaunee, Mohawk, Seminole, Choctaw, and Catawba survived in smaller numbers there. Other tribes were eventually pushed out and made their way across the Appalachian Mountains.

After 1783, when the Treaty of Paris ended the Revolutionary War and recognized American independence, the U.S. government decided to treat the Native Americans living beyond the Appalachians as a sovereign, or separate, people. It used **diplomacy** in its dealings with them, just as it did in its relations with France, Spain, and Great Britain. However, Native Americans were at a distinct disadvantage. For one thing, they were many nations with differing points of view. For another, none of them wanted to give up their land. It is difficult to negotiate when you strongly disagree with the issue being discussed. Finally, diplomacy can only go so far when there is a determined effort to achieve one goal—to gain more land—Native American land.

## Diplomacy Fails

Traditional diplomacy proved to be a doomed effort in part because Native American groups and the U.S. government did not understand each other. Here is one example of why there was misunderstanding.

Imagine that someone comes to your neighborhood. He spots a neighbor of yours, one who seems rich or important. This visitor

### Vocabulary

**diplomacy**, n.  
the management  
of relationships  
between groups  
or countries using  
negotiation to  
avoid conflict

then offers your neighbor some money to “buy” *all* the houses in the area and gives your neighbor a house elsewhere. Your neighbor then “sells” the neighborhood. When you come home and learn what has happened, you are angry. When the buyer shows up to take possession, you refuse to leave. Arguments and fights soon break out.

Something like this happened with the Native Americans. You see, American officials had appointed people to represent the American government. An official might come to a Native American “neighborhood” and talk to someone who seemed important, maybe a chief. A **treaty** would be written and signed. The government would give this leader money and land somewhere else in the country. The treaty would also say that he and the rest of his group must leave in a certain amount of time because other people wanted to settle there.

The official would return to Washington and tell his supervisors that the treaty was signed. It would then be sent to Congress for approval. Meanwhile, settlers would hear that the government had bought this area of land and would decide to move there. They would bring all their goods over hundreds of miles, over mountains and through rivers. When they got to the area, *both* Native Americans and settlers would be surprised.

The settlers would say, “Your leader signed a treaty and received money for this land. You agreed to move. You’re not supposed to be here.”

### Vocabulary

**treaty**, n. a formal agreement between two or more groups, especially countries

The Native Americans would say, "Someone may have signed a treaty, but we didn't. The one who signed that treaty does not speak for us. This is not his land. This is the land of our ancestors. You must leave!"

One of these things would happen next: The Native Americans would threaten the settlers, who would leave; the settlers would refuse to leave, and the Native Americans would reluctantly move; the Native Americans and settlers would fight each other; or U.S. troops would be sent to forcefully remove the Native Americans.

Diplomacy failed because Americans did not understand tribal leadership. Native American groups did not belong to one central



As more settlers moved west, Native Americans were forced off their land.

government. They could not be treated like independent nations, such as Great Britain or France. As a result, an agreement made with one group of Sioux had no meaning to other Sioux and certainly had no meaning to the Cheyenne.

Nor did Americans understand how fiercely independent most Native Americans were—they often ignored their own leader's words. If a tribe had chiefs at all (some did not), they were not like a U.S. president who represents all Americans. A Native American might be a chief because he had shown bravery or good sense or had respect from others in the group. But that did not mean his word was law. This was not disobedience but a Native American way of life.

## The Growth of a Country

After the Revolutionary War, Americans were excited and happy to be in control of their own nation. In the early 1800s, another important event happened. The French emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, needed money to fight wars in Europe. France owned huge amounts of land west of the Mississippi River, from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. Napoleon sold this land, known as the Louisiana Territory, to the United States in 1803. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States! This decision, though beneficial to the new American nation, had quite an impact on the Native Americans who lived in the Louisiana Territory.

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson approved an expedition to explore the huge region. When the Lewis and Clark expedition—

as it came to be called—got under way, Captain Meriwether Lewis spoke to the Osage people in the Missouri Valley:

### Vocabulary

**commerce**, n. trade; the buying and selling of goods and services

We are all now of one family, born in the same land, and bound to live as brothers; and the strangers from beyond the great water (the British Army) are gone from among us. The Great Spirit has given you strength, and has given us strength; not that we might hurt one another, but to do each other all the good in our power. Our dwellings indeed are very far apart, but not too far to carry on **commerce** and useful (discussions). . . . Let us employ ourselves then in mutually accommodating each other.



Captain Meriwether Lewis wished to establish trading partnerships with Native Americans he and his expedition encountered.

Again, the hope for peaceful cooperation was expressed, but the brotherhood and unity that Lewis wished for proved difficult to realize.

## Removal and Assimilation

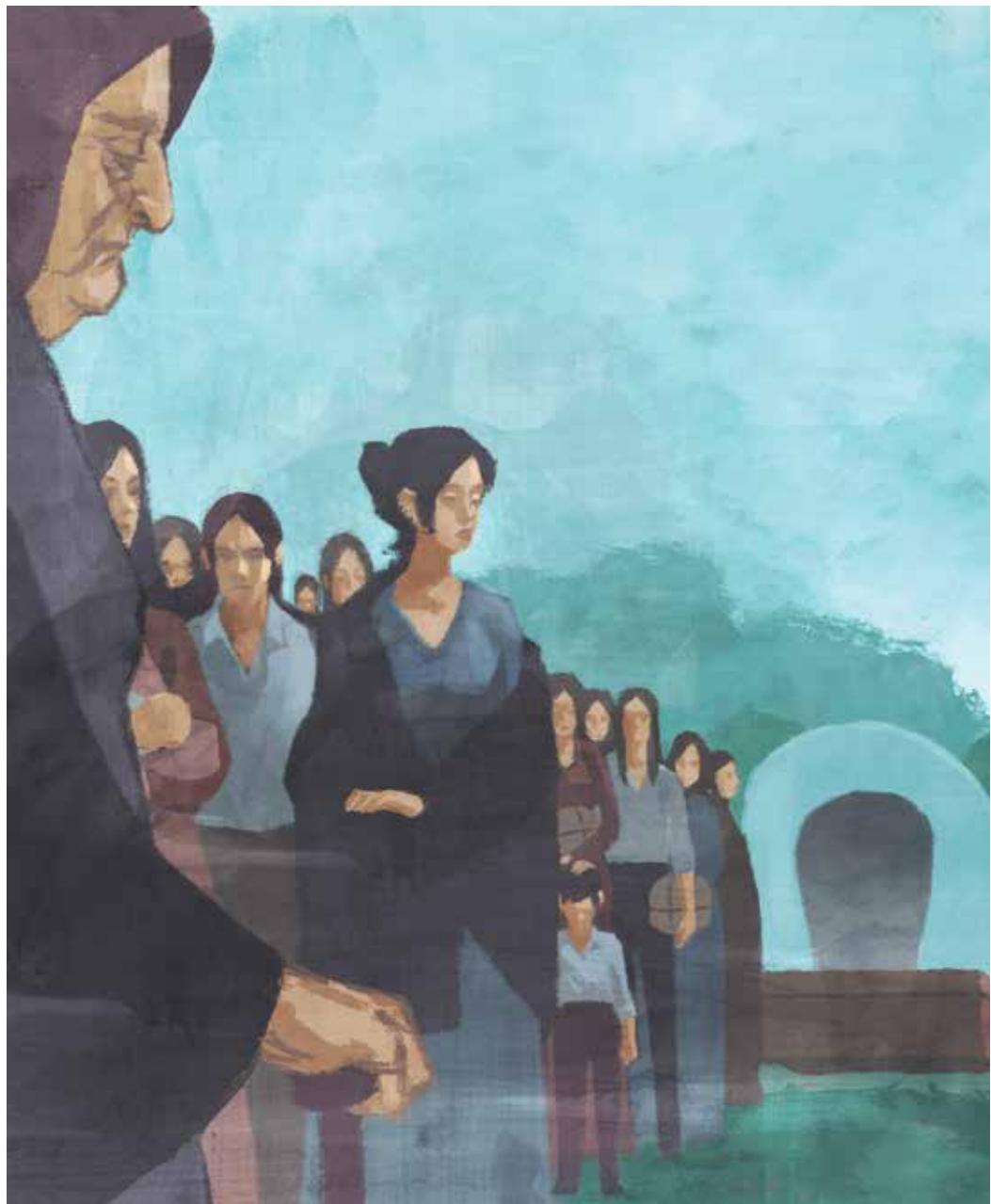
Americans at this time mainly farmed or worked in the ever-growing cities. That is largely how they earned money to survive. Making money was, and is, a necessary thing. Most of these early Americans were Christians. Most had homes they lived in all the time. Most believed land should and could be owned by individuals, and used in certain ways—such as to grow food or to develop towns and cities on.

The general feeling (and hope) was that Native Americans would eventually live in this way, too. Many Americans were convinced that once Native Americans **assimilated**, they could all live together.

To achieve this, Americans wanted to move Native Americans onto land *reserved*, or set aside, for them. There they could learn new skills. Of course, this meant that Native Americans would be isolated from European Americans and their way of life. But, regardless, the U.S. government adopted a policy of moving Native Americans to reservations across the Mississippi River. By 1860, a great majority of Native Americans were relocated and isolated. But it did not happen without a struggle.

### Vocabulary

**assimilate**, v. to adopt the ways of another culture



**Native Americans were forced onto reservations.**

When Native Americans would not sign treaties that sent them to reservations, or when they signed treaties but would not move, the U.S. Army forced them to move. Sometimes Native Americans moved peacefully; sometimes they did not.

## The Trail Where They Cried

In the 1830s, no Native American peoples were moving more quickly toward adopting American ways than the Cherokee of the southeastern United States. They created an alphabet and published a newspaper. Their ancestral land was especially suitable for cultivating cotton—the crop that was making many American Southerners rich. And there was gold in their mountains!

As a result, in 1832, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokee could keep their lands. But President Andrew Jackson ignored the Court's ruling. He sent the army to move the Cherokee far to the west, to what is now Oklahoma. In 1838, the government ordered nine thousand soldiers to build **stockades** and fill them with Cherokee and other Native Americans.

The army herded about fifteen thousand Cherokee into the stockades. The army then force-marched them on an eight-hundred-mile journey

### Vocabulary

**stockades**, n.

enclosures or pens usually made from stakes or poles driven into the ground



Thousands of Cherokee died on the forced march called the Trail of Tears.

to Oklahoma. Hunger, summer heat, and winter cold killed about four thousand of them in the stockades or on the march. They could not even bury their dead. This tragedy is known in American history as the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee called it *Nuna-da-ut-sun'y*, "The Trail Where They Cried."

## The Carlisle School

Moving Native Americans onto reservations was a short-term solution. Adult Native Americans for the most part wanted to continue to live according to their traditions. For example, a Native American of the Plains used to hunting bison did not want to return to the life of farming. That was a lifestyle his ancestors had given up not so long ago when the horse had been introduced.

A man named Richard Henry Pratt, a U.S. officer of the 10th Cavalry, commanded a unit of African American "Buffalo Soldiers" and



The Carlisle School was built to assimilate Native American children.

Native American scouts. He hoped he had an answer: If older Native Americans would not adopt American ways, then Americans should try to assimilate *young* Native Americans. On October 6, 1879, Pratt opened Carlisle Industrial School, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. In this school, there were eighty-two Native American children who had been taken from their homes.

School life was modeled after military life. Boys wore army-style uniforms, and girls wore dresses. Children wore shoes, not moccasins. Against tradition, their hair was cut short. Students marched to and from classes and dining halls. As far as language was concerned, the rule was English only. Reading, writing, and mathematics in the morning were followed by metalworking and carpentry (for the boys) or cooking and laundry (for the girls) in the afternoon. Music was also taught. Native American children were not allowed to practice their traditional religions.

To speed up assimilation, students were not allowed to go home for vacations. Instead, they worked in American homes so they could continue learning new ways. Pratt wanted to “kill the Indian, save the man.”

Although Native American children may have learned skills and gained knowledge, the experience was anything but a positive one. Other schools were created based on this model. All of the schools, including Carlisle, exposed the Native American children to germs their bodies were not always able to fight. After taking in twelve thousand Native American children over a thirty-nine-year period, Carlisle School closed. Most of the other schools failed, too.

# Chapter 6

# Tensions Mount

**The Invisible “Guns”** For a long time Native Americans had lived completely isolated from the rest of the world. They had never been exposed to diseases such as measles, **smallpox**, and influenza, so they had no resistance to them.

## The Big Question

What factors made it increasingly difficult for Native Americans to live according to their own traditions?

### Vocabulary

**smallpox**, n. a serious disease that spreads from person to person and causes a fever and rash

They had no vaccines and no medicines to fight these diseases. A Native American might visit a trading post and shake hands with a European who had one of these diseases.



Contact with Europeans introduced deadly diseases to Native American societies.

The European might become ill but would probably recover because he had been exposed to the disease before. The Native American, however, would return to his tribe, fall ill, and, in all likelihood, infect other members of his tribe.

Once a disease was introduced into a Native American village, people began dying. Sometimes 50 to 90 percent of the people would die. Worse, all the people would get sick at the same time. That meant there were few villagers left to hunt, tend crops, and nurse the sick.

Smallpox hit Native Americans in the Northeast in 1633, causing a 95 percent death rate among some villages along the Connecticut River. In 1620, the Huron numbered around twenty thousand people. By 1640, disease had slashed that number in half.

In the Pacific Northwest, diseases killed nearly one out of three Native Americans. Between 1780 and 1820, half of the Native Americans living in the northern Rockies died.

The winter of 1839–1840 was especially devastating. It became known as the “smallpox winter.” Estimates say that eight thousand Blackfoot, two thousand Pawnee, and one thousand Crow died from smallpox that winter.

For the most part, these infections were accidental and spread unknowingly. There was nothing anyone could have done about them. However, there were some exceptional cases in which Europeans used disease as a weapon against Native Americans. During a siege of a British fort in 1763, the fort’s commander invited some of the Delaware, who had staged the attack,



Generally, Europeans did not intend to transmit diseases to Native Americans.

to a truce in order to talk peace. As a greeting, the commander presented the Delaware with a handkerchief and two blankets that he knew were infected with smallpox. During the next few months, hundreds of Delaware in the Ohio Valley died.

## Continuing Growth

While the number of Native Americans decreased, the number of European settlers increased. Throughout the 1800s, everything that Europeans heard about the United States and Canada was “wonderful,” “marvelous,” and “dazzling.” They were told that America offered limitless opportunity to anyone who worked hard. The Swedish dairyman, the French peasant, the Irish farmer, the English storekeeper, the German butcher, and others all believed that they could come to the United States and make a better life for their families. And then there was the discovery of gold in the West and the stories about becoming rich overnight. True or not, such tales lured immigrants to America’s shores *by the millions*. These new waves of immigrants needed land. And they were going to get it!

After the Revolutionary War and the Louisiana Purchase, U.S. territory reached far beyond the Mississippi River. Spain held on to Florida and the southernmost parts of Georgia and Mississippi until 1819. Then those lands became part of the United States as well.

The United States continued to grow. Texas was **annexed** in 1845, and although it had won its independence from Mexico nine years earlier, this move touched off the Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1848. That war ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. With this treaty, the United States gained lands from Mexico that would become New Mexico,

### Vocabulary

**annex**, v. to take over territory



European immigration increased the pressure for land.

Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and California. The final “puzzle piece” was put into place in 1846 when Great Britain agreed that lands south of the **49<sup>th</sup> parallel**, 49° north latitude, (now Washington, Oregon, and Idaho) would belong to the United States. The lands that would become the United States were now open to settlement.

### Vocabulary

**“49<sup>th</sup> parallel,”**  
(phrase) the line of latitude that defines part of the border between the United States and Canada

Although Americans were pleased by the expansion of the United States, they were disappointed in their attempts to assimilate the Native Americans. They had hoped they would abandon their traditional ways of living and become farmers, ranchers, and store clerks.

While some did assimilate, others refused. But all Native Americans regarded attempts to seize their tribal and ancestral lands as theft. Their resistance angered Americans.

With a dwindling Native American population and an increasing American population, with American military superiority, and with a lack of a central Native American leadership to bring the many tribes together as a force, the consequences were inevitable.

## **Internal and External Conflicts**

By treaty, all the land west of the Mississippi River was supposed to belong to Native Americans “forever.” But even this agreement caused major problems: The Plains people who lived there did not really want to share their hunting grounds with the Native Americans removed from the East. As you remember, Plains peoples depended on bison for many of their needs. But the arrival of new tribes and American settlers had a dramatic effect on the bison population. Americans often killed these animals for sport, shooting them from trains. In some instances, Americans killed bison in order to use the hide to make leather. Whatever the reason, the bison population declined. Estimates place the bison population in 1800 at forty million. By 1850, the number was cut



Westward expansion drove the bison almost to extinction.

in half. By 1875, the number of bison was reduced to about one million. By 1895, there were fewer than one thousand bison in the United States. Less food, and more competition for the food, led to intertribal wars.

When gold was discovered on reservation land, many settlers crossed the Mississippi River in search of riches as well as **homesteads**. Many battles and skirmishes were fought between settlers, U.S. forces, and Native Americans.

### Vocabulary

**homestead**, n. a home and the land surrounding it

## **Wars in the West**

After 1860, most of the fighting between the U.S. military and Native Americans took place west of the Mississippi River. U.S. forces were determined to gain control over the huge western territory and to clear routes for American settlers to move west. The battles became more intense and tragic.

### **The Sand Creek Massacre**

In November 1864, the United States was still being torn apart by the Civil War. Within five long and bloody months, General Robert E. Lee would surrender to General Ulysses S. Grant, and the Civil War would be over.

Imagine living in the new and thriving city of Denver, Colorado, in the winter of 1864. The Civil War is distant to you. You are more concerned with the shouting in the streets that has awakened you and your parents. You run to the window and throw it open. You hear your father shout from your front door, "What's all the fuss?"

One of the people in the street shouts back, "Native Americans killed a miner's family!"

You ask them, "Which Native Americans did such a thing?"

They reply, "No one knows for sure. No one even knows if it was really Native Americans."

At dawn the next day, you are again awakened, this time by seven hundred horses mounted by seven hundred men riding out southeast of Denver. They are led by Colonel Chivington. They intend to seek revenge for the death of the miner's family.

A few days later, you see a headline as your father reads the *Denver News*: “Colorado Soldiers Have Again Covered Themselves With Glory!”

“Father, what has happened?” you ask.

“A **massacre**,” he replies, his voice choked with anger and sadness.

### Vocabulary

**massacre**, n. the violent killing of defenseless people

## The Investigation

Colonel Chivington’s actions to “contain the dangerous Native Americans” made him an instant hero. But only briefly. Within the year, the U.S. Congress ordered an investigation into what people called the Sand Creek Massacre. Not until the investigation did the citizens find out what happened that November day. Colonel Chivington would no longer be considered a hero but a villain.

Earlier, in the summer of 1864, Governor Evans of the Colorado Territory had asked all Native Americans who were friendly to settlers to go to the nearest military post for protection. Soldiers were soon going to be sent out to deal with Native Americans who were acting in a hostile way. Native Americans not under the protection of a military post would be considered unfriendly and could be attacked.

Two groups of Cheyenne led by Black Kettle and White Antelope and one group of Arapaho led by Left Hand voluntarily entered Fort Lyon and declared their friendliness to settlers. They gave up their weapons and in return received protection and food—for a time.

After a while, they were told that they would no longer receive food. They must leave the fort to hunt and find food for themselves. Major Anthony, commander of Fort Lyon, recommended that Black Kettle, White Antelope, and Left Hand leave with their people and head for Sand Creek, some thirty-five miles away. Major Anthony returned the Native Americans' weapons to them.

On the morning of November 28, 1864, Colonel Chivington arrived at Fort Lyon with seven hundred mounted soldiers and two cannons. He joined Major Anthony, who had 125 soldiers and two cannons. They left for Sand Creek that evening.

Just after daybreak, Chivington and Anthony and their troops approached Sand Creek. They counted one hundred Cheyenne lodges and eight to ten Arapaho lodges. Chivington and Anthony estimated there were about 550 Native Americans and, grazing nearby, five hundred to six hundred horses.

Chivington sent some troops to capture the Native American horses, as he knew how fearsome the warriors were on horseback. Some of the horses broke away and ran into the village, alerting the sleeping Native Americans. The people ran from their lodges. Chief Black Kettle quickly hung an American flag along with a white flag of truce on his lodge. He wanted to make sure the soldiers understood that he and his people were friendly.

Chivington and Anthony ordered an attack. Within two hours, 123 Native Americans were dead. One hundred of them were women and children, including infants.

In his final report to Congress, the head of the investigation, Senator Benjamin F. Wade, wrote: "The truth is that he [Chivington] surprised and murdered, in cold blood, the unsuspecting men, women, and children on Sand Creek, who had every reason to believe they were under the protection of the United States authorities." The report ends by recommending severe punishment for Chivington and others, including removal from **office**.

### Vocabulary

**office**, n. a position of leadership or responsibility

Unfortunately, these men were never punished. The only people who suffered as a result of this event were the Cheyenne and Arapaho people who died in the massacre.



This painting shows an artist's version of the Sand Creek Massacre, an event that shocked the nation. Colonel Chivington ordered the brutal killing of the Native Americans.

# Chapter 7

# The Indian Wars

**Conflicts** After the massacre at Sand Creek, conflict became part of life. Yet, settlers continued to move across the frontier and into “Indian Territory.” Although their records were incomplete, the Bureau of Indian Affairs reported sixty-five clashes and wars between 1782 and 1890. This bloody period has become known as the Indian Wars Period.

## The Big Question

What factors made it increasingly impossible for Native Americans to resist the settlement of their land?

In much of the Southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico), the Apache had long resisted Spanish and American colonization of their homelands. They were willing to die fighting to preserve their way of life. In 1846, a seventeen-year-old warrior, Geronimo, had been admitted to the warriors’ council. Geronimo was embittered by the death of his mother, wife, and children at the hands of Mexicans in 1858. He took leadership of a band of warriors and led successive raids of revenge. Geronimo became a leader among his people. For most of his life, he fought against the U.S. government’s efforts to take Apache land.



During the Indian Wars Period, Native Americans fought to keep their land.

## On the Plains

Plains Native Americans fought hard to keep their lands. Their enemies praised them as “the best fighters the sun ever shone on.” The Sioux killed hundreds of settlers in Minnesota before army forces stopped them. In the 1860s, Chief Red Cloud and other strong chiefs chased away the settlers who dared to enter Sioux territory.

Sitting Bull was a Hunkpapa Sioux respected for his courage and wisdom. In 1866, he became a leader of the northern Sioux. In 1868, he and some of the Sioux agreed to the Second Treaty of Fort Laramie, making peace with the U.S. government. This treaty guaranteed the Sioux a reservation until the end of time in what is now southwestern South Dakota. The treaty recognized the nearby Black Hills as the sacred hunting grounds of the Sioux and Cheyenne.

The peace only lasted a few years. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills in 1874 caused a rush of **prospectors** and miners to invade the sacred hunting grounds of the Sioux and Cheyenne. The Sioux, under Chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, fought back against the prospectors and miners.

The U.S. government directed that all Native Americans must move onto reservations by January 31, 1876. Otherwise, they would be thought of as unfriendly. Officials sent **regiments** under the direction of General George F. Crook,

### Vocabulary

**prospector**, n. a person who searches an area for gold, minerals, or oil

**regiment**, n. a unit in the army

General Alfred H. Terry, and Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer to stop the warfare. They were to make sure Native Americans went to the reservations. The soldiers were also there to protect the miners. The Sioux were disheartened to discover that the troops were *not* sent to enforce the U.S. treaty with them but to protect the encroaching gold miners. Outraged by attacks from U.S. forces, Chief Sitting Bull and Chief Crazy Horse fought back.

On June 17, 1876, Sioux warriors surprised Crook's troops and defeated them in the Battle of Rosebud in southeastern Montana.

## Battle of Little Bighorn

A week later, on June 24, Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer and his regiment spotted a group of Sioux and Cheyenne warriors on the Little Bighorn River. Custer led one column of a planned two-part attack under the command of General Terry. Terry's column was to join him in two days. Instead of waiting for Terry, "Long Hair" (as the Native Americans called Custer) decided to attack.



Chief Sitting Bull (top) and Chief Crazy Horse (bottom) led the Sioux resistance against the U.S. government.

Unknowingly, Custer was up against the largest fighting force ever assembled on the Plains. There were between twenty-five hundred and four thousand warriors. Of the more than two hundred men who followed Custer into battle, not one lived to tell the story of what happened during that one hour on June 25. A single horse, Comanche, survived. For many years afterwards, Comanche appeared in parades, saddled but riderless. The Battle of Little Bighorn has become known as Custer's Last Stand.

In reaction to Custer's death, the defeat at the Little Bighorn, and Crook's losses, Americans demanded more military action. The Sioux continued to win their battles against U.S. troops. Even though they won battle after battle, the Native Americans could not stop the flow of settlers. The bison they depended on were dwindling in numbers. Hunger led more and more Sioux to surrender.

In May 1877, Sitting Bull led his remaining followers across the border into Canada. However, the Canadian government could not be responsible for taking care of Native Americans from the United States. After four years, Sitting Bull returned to the United States. Although he had a promise of **amnesty**, he served two years in prison for being the leader of the Sioux resistance and for killing American soldiers. He did not receive a trial as he was not considered to be a citizen of the United States. When he was released from prison, he returned to the reservation.

## Vocabulary

**amnesty**, n. a decision, usually by a government, not to punish a group or person who has committed a crime



The Sioux defeated U.S. troops at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

## The Nez Perce War

While Sitting Bull and his followers were making a new home in Canada, Chief Joseph and a band of Nez Perce were being forced from their home in the Wallowa Valley of Oregon.

In 1877, General Oliver O. Howard ordered Chief Joseph and his people to move to a reservation in Lapwai, Idaho. Chief Joseph persuaded Howard to agree that the Nez Perce had never actually signed a treaty giving up their homeland. Howard was in a difficult situation. First, he recognized that Americans were settling this part of Oregon, and wide-roaming Native Americans would not be able to survive. Second, he was under orders to move the Native Americans to the reservation. Most of the Nez Perce reluctantly agreed. Unfortunately, some young warriors in Joseph's group who opposed the decision to move attacked and killed some ranchers.

In spite of his sympathies toward the Native Americans, Howard did not wait a moment to send his troops against the Nez Perce warriors. And so the Nez Perce War began.

Chief Joseph and his band of Nez Perce were now outlaws, and federal troops pursued them. About one thousand Nez Perce—carrying all the worldly goods they could—retreated. They tried to reach Canada to join up with the Sioux led by Sitting Bull. Over the next few months, the Nez Perce trekked some fifteen hundred miles over rugged mountains and through forested passes, fighting the troops following them.

On September 30, 1877—at Bear Paw Mountain, forty miles from the Canadian border—U.S. troops and the Nez Perce clashed for the last time. A few days later, Chief Joseph surrendered, hoping to save the four hundred fellow Nez Perce who remained. Joseph himself lost his daughter, a brother, and many relatives.

Chief Joseph said at the formal surrender:

I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. . . . The old men are all dead. . . . It is cold, and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me my chiefs! I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.



**Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce**

When Chief Joseph surrendered, General Howard argued loudly and clearly, though unsuccessfully, that the Nez Perce be allowed to return to their homes. The government confined Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas. Joseph appealed to the military, to the U.S. president, and to the American people in general.

He asked the government to allow his people to return to their ancestor's lands. Chief Joseph never saw his homeland again. Not until 1885 were 268 Nez Perce permitted to return to the Plateau region.

## Apache Battles Continue

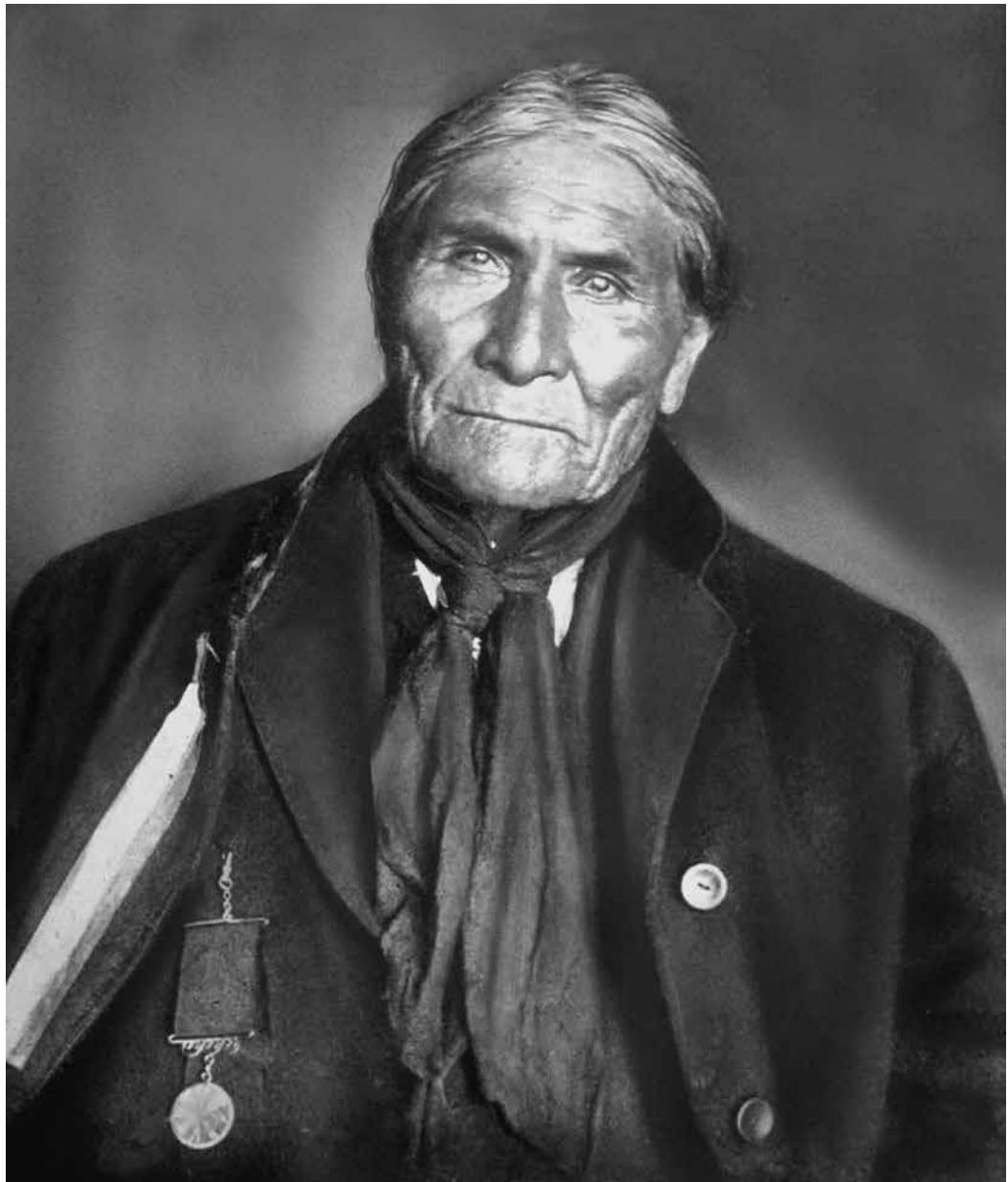
In 1874, U.S. authorities forcibly moved some four thousand Apache to a reservation at San Carlos, a wasteland in east-central Arizona. Many Apache could not tolerate reservation life. Also, they were short on **rations**. They turned to Geronimo and other leaders who led them off the reservation to continue their resistance.

In 1882, General Crook went after Geronimo and his band of Apache. Geronimo surrendered a few years later, only to escape from the San Carlos Reservation a second time. Crook recaptured Geronimo ten months later in the state of Sonora, Mexico. As he neared the U.S. border, however, Geronimo and his followers feared they would be killed once they crossed into U.S. territory. Geronimo and his Apache escaped once again.

No fewer than five thousand soldiers and five hundred Native American volunteers were employed at various times in trying to find Geronimo's small band. Five months and 1,645 miles later, Geronimo was tracked to his camp in the Sonora Mountains. At a conference in September 1886, Geronimo surrendered one

### Vocabulary

**ration**, n. a certain amount of food



Geronimo led the Apache against U.S. troops.

last time. Occasional raids by other Apache bands continued until the 1890s. Meanwhile, even the Apache who helped the U.S. Army fight Geronimo were exiled from their native land.

# Chapter 8

# The Ghost Dance

**A New Hope?** The conflict between Native Americans and settlers saw much bloodshed over the centuries. But more than lives was lost. Native Americans lost homelands their families had lived on for hundreds of years. Their parents and ancestors were buried on lands they could no longer visit.

Those lands, as you have learned, were the life source for all their worldly needs. The reservations they were forced to live on were often barren and **inhospitable**.

## The Big Question

How did the Ghost Dance come about, and what did it represent for Native Americans?

### Vocabulary

**inhospitable**,  
adj. harsh or  
unwelcoming

**subsistence**, n. just  
enough food to keep  
a person alive

On the Plains reservations, insects and drought prevented Native Americans from growing gardens. Treaties promised **subsistence**, (just enough food to survive), but many times the promises were not honored. Sometimes Native Americans received only half of the food they needed to survive. They were faced with hunger and even death.



Life on reservations was difficult for Native Americans, in part because they could not get what they needed from the land.

By the 1880s, in spite of increased resistance and significant military victories, most Native Americans felt conquered and in despair. Many were ready to hear any message of hope that could be given. That message came first as a whisper and then as a great shout from a Paiute leader in the Great Basin—Wovoka, called Jack Wilson by settlers.

Traditional Native American cultures valued **spirituality**. Native Americans relied on a Great Spirit to speak to them through signs and symbols, even dreams and **visions**. On New Year's Day in 1889, Wovoka claimed to have had such a vision.

I went up to heaven and saw God and all the people who had died a long time ago. God told me to come back and tell my people they must be good and love one another, and not fight, or steal, or lie. He gave me this dance to give my people.

Wovoka became a spiritual leader. Wovoka claimed that in his vision, he saw all his dead ancestors “engaged in their old-time sports and occupations, all happy and forever young.” He claimed that the dance he had seen in his vision would bring dead and living Native Americans together in their old homelands. The bison would return as well. The settlers would go back to the land where the sun rose. The dance he spoke about came to be called the Ghost Dance.

### Vocabulary

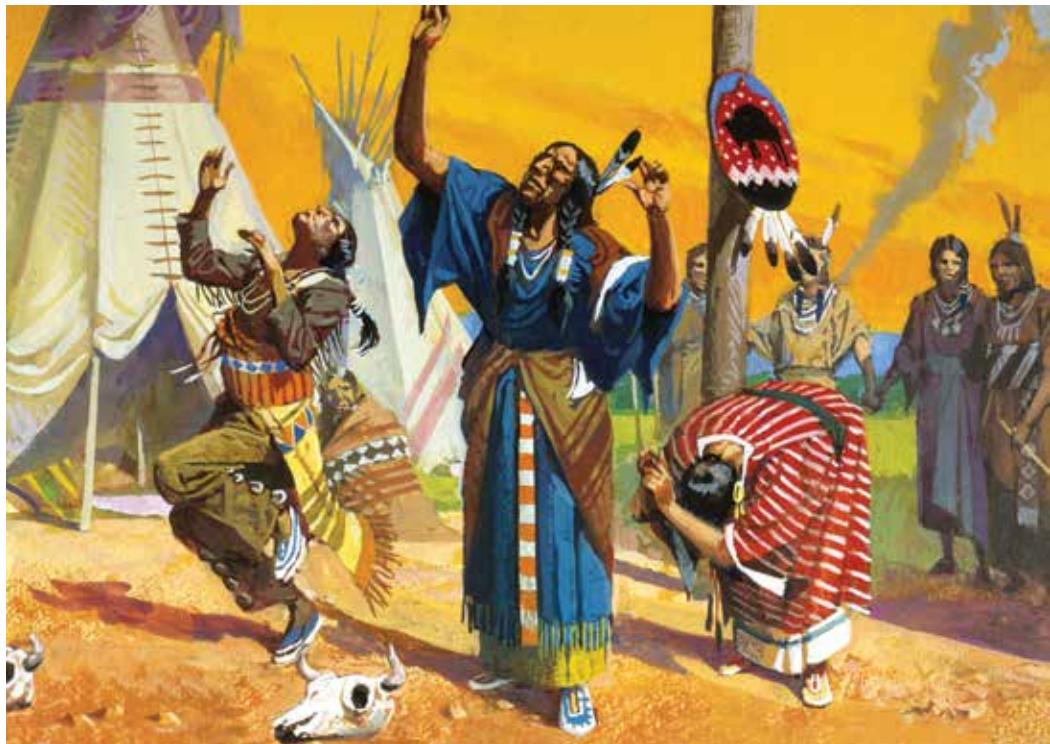
**spirituality**, n. a belief in supernatural beings or phenomena; also refers to belief in the soul

**vision**, n. an image in one's mind or imagination that others cannot see

In order for these visions to come true, though, Wovoka told his people they must live quietly and honestly. He spoke of non-violence. He spoke against the American ways, especially drinking alcohol. However, he did urge Native Americans to adopt certain American ways, such as farming and education.

By the fall of 1889, leaders of other tribes had journeyed to the Great Basin to hear Wovoka's message and to dance the large circle dances he taught them. They took his message and his dances back to their people. Some tribes danced the Ghost Dance nightly.

But some tribes—such as the Sioux—heard things a certain way: The good days will return; yes, but only if the settlers go away.



The Ghost Dance became a symbol of hope and resistance for many Native Americans.

In less than a year, the Ghost Dance was embraced by many Plains Native Americans. They even wore Ghost Shirts—cotton shirts decorated with feathers and drawings of eagles and bison—that they thought would protect them from soldiers' bullets.

## New Religion

The Ghost Dance inspired some Native Americans, but it made many settlers fearful. Officials in Washington were informed that Native Americans “are dancing in the snow and are wild and crazy. . . . We need protection and we need it now. The leaders should be arrested and confined at some military post until the matter is quieted, and this should be done now.”

Finally, in November 1890, American officials banned the Ghost Dance in Dakota Territory. When the dances continued, troops were called into the area. The military was sure that trouble was brewing.

Suspecting that the great Sioux leader Sitting Bull might be the one to lead a rebellion, the Bureau of Indian Affairs agent at the Standing Rock Reservation wrote: “(Sitting Bull) is the chief mischief maker, and if he were not here, this craze so general among the [Native Americans] would never have gotten a foothold at this agency.”

Orders for Sitting Bull’s arrest came. Police representing the Bureau of Indian Affairs tried to arrest the former leader, but his followers tried to protect him. A fight broke out, and Sitting Bull was killed. Big Foot, Sitting Bull’s half brother, was next on the soldiers’ arrest list.

## The Battle of Wounded Knee

When Big Foot heard of his half brother's death, he fled with a group south to the Pine Ridge Reservation. Many of Sitting Bull's followers fled to join Chief Big Foot, who was a leader of the Ghost Dancers. On December 28, 1890, a group of about five hundred soldiers caught up with Big Foot's group of 106 warriors and about 250 women and children. Ill and facing terrible odds, Big Foot was persuaded to lead his people to Wounded Knee Creek. There they would be disarmed before proceeding to the Pine Ridge Reservation.

The next morning, December 29, soldiers under the direction of General Nelson A. Miles entered Big Foot's camp to gather all firearms. Only a few of the Native Americans agreed to this. The soldiers searched the tepees and found about thirty-eight rifles. Then, they asked the Native Americans to open the blankets draped about them against the cold. A young warrior, Black Coyote, raised his hidden rifle over his head and shouted that he would not give it up. As soldiers wrestled with Black Coyote, the rifle fired.



U.S. troops killed hundreds of Native Americans at Wounded Knee.

The soldiers were already extremely nervous and feared that they would be killed. They opened fire immediately. From above the camp, the army fired its cannon into the camp. The Sioux men, women, and children ran for their lives.

By noon, three hundred Native Americans, including Big Foot and many women and children, lay dead. Fifty were wounded. Troops continued hunting those Native Americans who had fled. The army casualties were twenty-five dead, thirty-nine wounded. Many army deaths were from “friendly crossfire”—one soldier shooting at a Native American but hitting a soldier on the other side of the camp.

Viewing the scene later in the day, the Oglala Sioux holy man Black Elk said, “I wished that I had died too, but I was not sorry for the women and children. It was better for them to be happy in the other world.”

Later, an army investigator concluded: “There is nothing to conceal or apologize for in the Wounded Knee Battle. The [Native Americans] brought on their own destruction as surely as any people ever did.” Nineteen soldiers who fought at the Battle of Wounded Knee received the Congressional Medal of Honor, the country’s most distinguished military honor.

Scattered fighting between U.S. forces and the Native Americans continued. But the Battle of Wounded Knee stopped the Ghost Dance Indian Wars.

## **After the Indian Wars**

The wars between Native Americans and the U.S. government ended, but the complicated relationship between them continues

today. Many Native Americans still live on reservations and still struggle with life there. Others have joined American society. During World War II in the 1940s, for example, many Native American men served in the U.S. military. Navajo men used their native language as an unbreakable code to deliver messages.

Still, Native Americans work hard to preserve their cultures and traditions. One example is the pow wow. Similar to the tradition of the potlatch, a pow wow is a gathering of Native Americans that includes “giveaways” and traditional dances. Sometimes a pow wow is attended by members of a single Native American nation; other times, it is a coming together of different Native American nations. Always, it is a celebration of a heritage that has survived for hundreds of years.



Pow wows are modern celebrations of Native American culture.

# Glossary

**"49<sup>th</sup> parallel," (phrase)** the line of latitude that defines part of the border between the United States and Canada (119)

## A

**amnesty, n.** a decision, usually by a government, not to punish a group or person who has committed a crime (130)

**ancestry, n.** the people who were in your family in past times (98)

**annex, v.** to take over territory (118)

**assimilate, v.** to adopt the ways of another culture (109)

**awl, n.** a sharp, pointed tool used for sewing and to make holes (88)

## B

**bitterroot, n.** a plant that grows in dry areas and has roots that can be eaten (77)

## C

**clan, n.** a group of families claiming a common ancestor (98)

**commerce, n.** trade; the buying and selling of goods and services (108)

**copper, n.** a type of metal (99)

**corral, n.** a fenced area for animals (68)

**coyote, n.** an animal similar to a wolf, but smaller (78)

## D

**diplomacy, n.** the management of relationships between groups or countries using negotiation to avoid conflict (104)

## E

**emblem, n.** a symbol (98)

## F

**fortitude, n.** strength or determination (90)

## H

**harpoon, n.** a spear used to hunt fish or whales (77)

**homestead, n.** a home and the land surrounding it (121)

**hunter-gatherers, n.** small groups of people who feed themselves by hunting animals and gathering plants (72)

## I

**inhospitable, adj.** harsh or unwelcoming (136)

**"initiation rite," (phrase)** an act that a person must complete to join a group (90)

**irrigate, v.** to water crops by moving water from a well, a river, or a lake to a place where it does not rain enough to grow crops (68)

## M

**massacre, n.** the violent killing of defenseless people (123)

**moccasin, n.** a soft leather shoe made from animal skins (88)

**moral, adj.** relating to ideas of right and wrong (66)

**myth, n.** a traditional story, often concerning the early history of a people or explaining some natural or social occurrence, and typically involving supernatural beings or events (66)

## N

**nation, n.** the land and people who live under the authority of a government and its laws; a country (62)

## O

**office, n.** a position of leadership or responsibility (125)

---

**P**

**prospector, n.** a person who searches an area for gold, minerals, or oil (128)

---

**Q**

**quiver, n.** a case for holding arrows (88)

---

**R**

**ration, n.** a certain amount of food (134)

**regiment, n.** a unit in the army (128)

---

**S**

**shaman, n.** a Native American leader who is believed to have special powers (66)

**smallpox, n.** a serious disease that spreads from person to person and causes a fever and rash (114)

**snowshoe, n.** a lightweight frame that lets a person walk on snow without sinking (75)

**spirituality, n.** a belief in supernatural beings or phenomena; also refers to belief in the soul (138)

**stockades, n.** enclosures or pens usually made from stakes or poles driven into the ground (111)

**subsistence, n.** just enough food to keep a person alive (136)

---

**T**

**tepee, n.** a cone-shaped tent used by Native American groups living on the Plains (87)

**totem, n.** a plant or animal that is a respected symbol in Native American society (97)

**treaty, n.** a formal agreement between two or more groups, especially countries (105)

**tribe, n.** a group of people who share the same language, customs, beliefs, and leadership (62)

---

**V**

**vision, n.** an image in one's mind or imagination that others cannot see (138)





**CKHG™**  
**Core Knowledge HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY™**

**Series Editor-In-Chief**  
E.D. Hirsch, Jr.

**Editorial Directors**  
Linda Bevilacqua and Rosie McCormick

# Westward Expansion After the Civil War

## Subject Matter Experts

J. Chris Arndt, PhD, Department of History, James Madison University

Tony Williams, Senior Teaching Fellow, Bill of Rights Institute

## Illustration and Photo Credits

Cover Images: Cowboy with lasso, Wood, Stanley L. (1866–1928) / Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images; Driving the Golden Spike on 10th May, 1869 (colour litho), American School, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures / Bridgeman Images

Billy The Kid (1859–81) c.1880 (copy of the original tintype), American Photographer, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark Western Americana / Bridgeman Images: 51

Cattle Drive1, c.1877 (oil on canvas), Walker, James (1818–89) / California Historical Society Collections at the Autry / Gift of Mr and Mrs Reginald F. Walker / Bridgeman Images: 23

Chinese workers helping construct the Central Pacific Railroad, completed 1869 (colour litho), American School, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures / Bridgeman Images: 13

Covered wagons heading west (oil on canvas), Wyeth, Newell Convers (1882–1945) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures / Bridgeman Images: 44–45

Cowboy with lasso, Wood, Stanley L. (1866–1928) / Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images: 27

Cutaway of hillside showing tunnels and supports, 1876 / Universal History Archive/UIG / Bridgeman Images: 5

Driving the Golden Spike on 10th May, 1869 (colour litho), American School, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures / Bridgeman Images: 16

Everett Collection/SuperStock: 37

Fotosearch/SuperStock: 41

Gold Mining in California, published by Currier & Ives, 1861 (litho), Brown, Grafton Tyler (1841–1918) (after) / Private Collection / Bridgeman Images: 2–3

Jed Henry: 10–11, 15

La Salle Street Station; Chicago, Illinois, USA (coloured photo), American Photographer, (20th century) / Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Elgar Collection / Bridgeman Images: 19

Land sale poster, 1875 (print), American School, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures / Bridgeman Images: 1, 35

LOOK-foto/SuperStock: 21

Mount McKinley (oil on canvas), Laurence, Sidney (1865–1939) / Private Collection / Photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images: 55

Murray Cooper/Minden Pictures/SuperStock: 43

Oklahoma Land Rush, 1889, Sooners claim land / Photo © Tallandier / Bridgeman Images: 48

Panning for gold in California (b/w photo), American Photographer, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures / Bridgeman Images: 9

Pioneer Family in Front of Sod House, Portrait, Kansas, USA, circa 1880 / Private Collection / J.T. Vintage / Bridgeman Images: 38–39

Portrait of Emperor Alexander II (1818–81), 1856 (oil on canvas), Botmann, G. (19th century) / Museum of History, Moscow, Russia / Bridgeman Images: 57

Poster advertising Annie Oakley featuring in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show (colour litho), American School, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark Western Americana / Bridgeman Images: 52

Promontory Point, Utah, May 10, 1869 : meeting between 2 locomotives : one of Union Pacific (from east), one of Central Pacific (from west) : completion of 1st transcontinental railway in USA / Bridgeman Images: 16

Reward Poster for Billy the Kid (1859–81) (litho), American School, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark Western Americana / Bridgeman Images: 51

Stephen J Krasemann/All Canada Photos/SuperStock: 22

SuperStock: 30–31, 33

The Stampede, 1912 (oil on canvas), Leigh, William Robinson (1866–1955) / Private Collection / Peter Newark Western Americana / Bridgeman Images: 29

Track-layers gang-building the Union Pacific Railroad through American wilderness, 1860s (b/w photo), American Photographer, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures / Bridgeman Images: 13

USA: Treasury Warrant for US\$7.2 million used to purchase Alaska from the Russian Empire, 30 March 1867 / Bridgeman Images: 58

Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express Office, C Street, Virginia City, Nevada, from 'Gems of California Scenery' published by Lawrence and Houseworth, 1866 (b/w photo), American Photographer, (19th century) / Private Collection / Bridgeman Images: 7

# **Native Americans: Cultures and Conflicts**

## **Subject Matter Expert**

Jeffrey Hantman, University of Virginia

Tony Williams, Senior Teaching Fellow, Bill of Rights Institute

## **Illustration and Photo Credits**

Cover Images: Sioux ghost dance, Baraldi, Severino (b.1930) / Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images; Sitting Bull, SuperStock/SuperStock

At the Sand Creek Massacre, 1874–75 (pen, ink & w/c on ledger paper), Howling Wolf (1849–1927) / Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio, USA / Gift of Mrs. Jacob D. Cox / Bridgeman Images: 125

Avi Katz: 73

Brittany Tingey: 70

Carolyn Wouden: 76

Durga Bernhard: 67

Dustin Mackay: 108, 126–127

Ellen Beier: 103

Everett Collection/SuperStock: 112

GERONIMO (1829–1909) Apache Indian chief (Plains Indian) c. 1900 / Bridgeman Images: 135

Gideon Kendall: 119

Hemis.fr/SuperStock: 143

Jacob Wyatt: 110, 111

Jed Henry: 87, 121

Joseph Ma: 84–85

Kristin Kwan: 106

Marti Major: 117

Martin Hargreaves: 96, 98

Michelle Weaver: 71

NaturePL/SuperStock: 79

Northwest coast of American Indians, family life, 2007 (w/c on paper), Harlin, Greg (b.1957) / Private Collection / Wood Ronsaville Harlin, Inc. USA / Bridgeman Images: 97

Ryan Palmer/SuperStock: 95

Scott Hammond: 114–115

Sharae Peterson: 90

Shari Darley Griffiths: 80–81

Sioux ghost dance, Baraldi, Severino (b.1930) / Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images: 139

SuperStock: 129A, 129B, 133

The Indian encirclement of General Custer at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Custer's Last Stand. After a work by Charles Marion Russell. / Private Collection / Photo © Ken Welsh / Bridgeman Images: 61, 131

Tomas Nevevesely / All Canada Photos / SuperStock: 92–93

Tyler Pack: 62–63

U.S. troops surrounding the Indians on Wounded Knee battle field 1913 (photo) / Universal History Archive/UIG / Bridgeman Images : 141

Venus Stock/SuperStock: 137



# **CKHG™**

## **Core Knowledge HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY™**

A comprehensive program in world and American history and geography, integrating topics in civics and the arts, exploring civilizations, cultures, and concepts specified in the **Core Knowledge Sequence** (content and skill guidelines for grades K-8).

### **Core Knowledge HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

titles at this level include

**World Lakes**

**Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations**

**The Age of Exploration**

**From the Renaissance to England's Golden Age**

**Czars and Shoguns: Early Russia and Feudal Japan**

**The Geography of the United States**

**Westward Expansion Before the Civil War**

**The Civil War**

**Native Americans and Westward Expansion:  
Cultures and Conflicts**

[www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)

### **Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™**

**Series Editor-in-Chief**

**E. D. Hirsch, Jr.**