



A Way of Life Ends



Explore These Questions

- Why did Native Americans and settlers come into conflict?
- How did Native Americans try to preserve their way of life?
- How did government policies affect Native American culture?

Define

- reservation

Identify

- Sitting Bull
- Fort Laramie Treaty
- Chivington Massacre
- Battle of Little Bighorn
- Chief Joseph
- Geronimo
- Ghost Dance
- Susette La Flesche
- Helen Hunt Jackson
- Dawes Act

SETTING the Scene

In 1876, **Sitting Bull**, a Lakota chief, wrote to the commander of United States Army troops, who had been sent to force him off his land:

“I want to know what you are doing on this road. You scare all the buffalo away. I want to hunt in this place. I want you to turn back from here. If you don’t, I will fight you.”

After the Civil War, many Americans moved west. At first, the United States government promised to protect Indian hunting grounds. However, as settlers pushed westward, the government broke its promises. When Indians resisted the arrival of settlers, wars spread across the West. For Native Americans, tragedy was the result.

Broken Promises

Conflict began as early as the 1840s when settlers and miners began to cross Indian hunting grounds. The settlers and miners asked for government protection from the Indians.

Fort Laramie Treaty

In 1851, federal government officials met with Indian nations near Fort Laramie in Wyoming. The officials asked each nation to keep to a limited area. In return, they

promised money, domestic animals, agricultural tools, and other goods. Officials told the Native Americans that the lands that were reserved for them would be theirs forever.

Native American leaders agreed to the terms in the **Fort Laramie Treaty**. However, in 1858, gold was discovered at Pikes Peak in Colorado. A wave of miners rushed to land that the government had promised to the Cheyennes and Arapahos.

Federal officials forced Indian leaders to sign a new treaty giving up the land around Pikes Peak. Some Native Americans refused to accept the agreement. They attacked white settlers.

The Chivington Massacre

The settlers struck back. In 1864, Colonel John Chivington led his militia against a peaceful Cheyenne village that the government had promised to protect. When Chivington attacked, the Indians raised a white flag of surrender. Chivington ignored the flag. He ordered his men to destroy the village and take no prisoners. In the **Chivington Massacre**, militia slaughtered more than 100 men, women, and children.

People throughout the United States were outraged. “When the white man comes in my country he leaves a trail of blood behind him,” said Lakota War Chief Red Cloud. Across the Plains, soldiers and Indians went to war.

Learning “American” ways

In 1867, federal officials established a peace commission. The commission wanted to end the wars on the Plains so that railroad builders and miners would be safe. The commission urged Native Americans to settle down and live as white farmers did. It also urged them to send their children to white schools to learn “American” ways.

At one white school in Indiana, Lakota children were horrified to hear that their hair would be cut short. Among the Lakotas, only cowards had short hair. One girl described her distress:

“I cried aloud . . . I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit.”

Forced onto reservations

In 1867, the Kiowas, Comanches, and other southern Plains Indians signed a new

treaty with the government. They promised to move to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma. The soil there was poor. Also, most Plains Indians were hunters, not farmers. The Indians did not like the treaty but knew they had no choice.

The Lakotas and Arapahos of the northern Plains also signed a treaty. They agreed to live on reservations in present-day South Dakota. A **reservation** is a limited area set aside for Native Americans.

End of the Buffalo

The Plains Indians suffered from lost battles and broken treaties. Even worse for them, however, was the destruction of the buffalo.

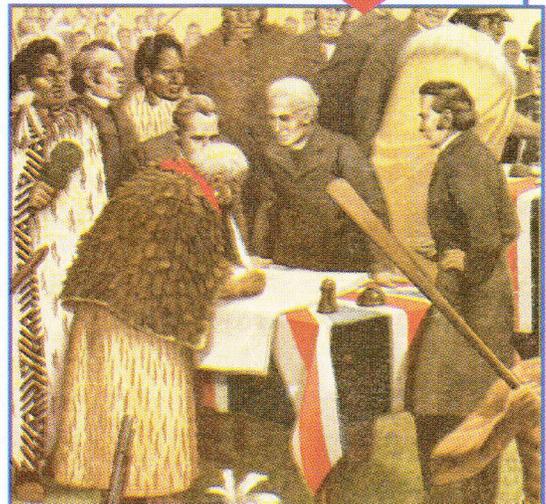
As the railroads moved west, buffalo hunting became a fashionable sport. Trainloads of easterners shot the animals from the comfort of railroad cars. Then, in the 1870s, buffalo hide blankets became popular in the East. Commercial hunters began shooting

Linking United States and the World

United States



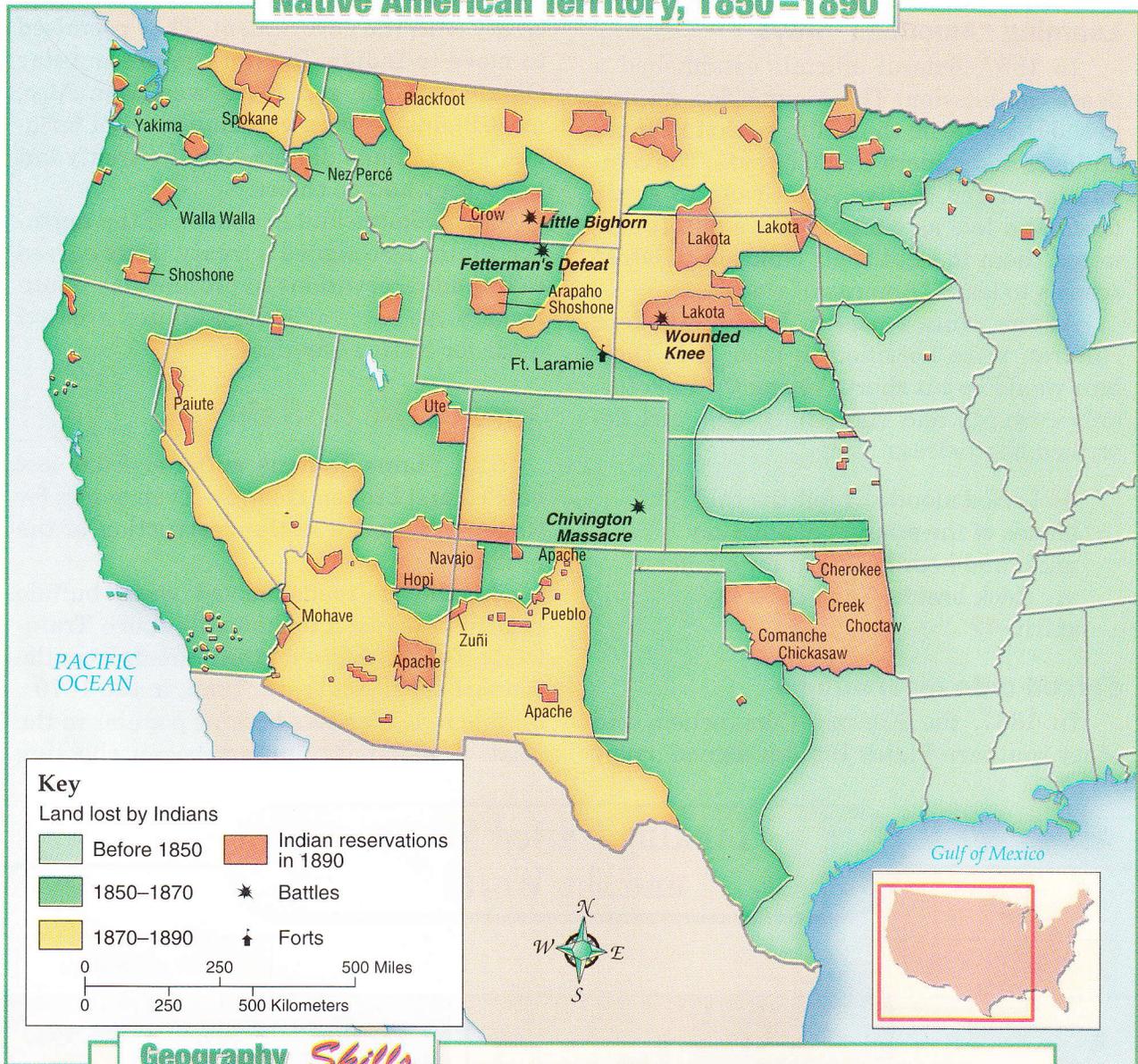
New Zealand



Surrendering Their Land

In 1868, Sioux leaders met with United States government officials at Fort Laramie. The Indians signed a treaty agreeing to live on a reservation. In 1840, on the other side of the world, the Maori people of New Zealand signed the Treaty of Waitangi. By this treaty, the Maori leaders gave Great Britain control over New Zealand. ★ **Why do you think the United States and Britain both wanted more land?**

Native American Territory, 1850–1890



Geography Skills

Fighting between Native Americans and the United States government went on for years until most Indians were forced onto reservations.

- 1. Location** On the map, locate: **(a)** Fort Laramie, **(b)** Little Bighorn, **(c)** Apache reservations, **(d)** Wounded Knee.
- 2. Region** In which areas of the country did Native Americans still retain much of their land in 1870?
- 3. Critical Thinking** Why do you think the Apaches of the desert Southwest were one of the last Indian nations to lose their land?

2 to 3 million buffalo every year. The number of buffalo fell from 13 million in 1860 to a few hundred in 1900.

Facing starvation, the Plains Indians had to struggle simply to survive. As the buffalo disappeared, so did the Plains Indians' way

of life. Years later, Pretty Shield, a woman of the Crow nation, sadly recalled the tragedy. "When the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. . . I [saw] dead buffalo scattered all over our beautiful country."

The Final Battles

Settlers and miners continued to move into the West. They wanted more and more land for themselves. Even on reservations, the Indians were not left in peace.

Sioux War of 1876

In 1874, prospectors found gold in the Black Hills region of the Lakota, or Sioux, reservation. Thousands of miners rushed to the area. Led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, another Lakota chief, the Indians fought back in what became known as the Sioux War of 1876.

In June 1876, Colonel George A. Custer led a column of soldiers into the Little Bighorn Valley. Indian scouts warned Custer that there were many Lakotas and Cheyennes camped ahead. Custer did not wait for more soldiers. Instead, he attacked with only 225 men. Custer and all his men died in the **Battle of Little Bighorn**.

The Indian victory at the Little Bighorn was shortlived. The army soon defeated the Lakotas and Cheyennes. Then, Congress ordered that no food rations be distributed to the Indians until they agreed to the government's demands. To avoid starvation, the Lakotas gave up all claims to the Black Hills and other territory. In this way, they surrendered about one third of the lands that the United States government had guaranteed them by the Fort Laramie Treaty.

Chief Joseph

The Nez Percés lived in the Snake River valley, at a place where Oregon, Washington, and Idaho meet. In the 1860s, gold strikes brought miners onto Nez Percé land. The government ordered the Nez Percés to move to a reservation in Idaho.

At first, **Chief Joseph**, a Nez Percé leader, refused to leave. Then, in 1877, he and his people, including women and children, fled north toward Canada. Army troops followed close behind.

In the months that followed, Chief Joseph earned the respect and admiration of many. Again and again, he fought off or eluded pursuing army units. He set high

standards for his soldiers, warning them not to injure women or children as the white soldiers did. He also made sure that his soldiers paid settlers for any supplies that they took.

Finally, after a tragic journey of more than 1,000 miles, Chief Joseph decided that he must surrender. Of the approximately 700 Nez Percés who had set out with him, fewer than 450 remained. As he lay down his weapons, he sadly said:

“It is cold, and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. . . . 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.”

The Apache wars

In the arid lands of the Southwest, the Apaches fiercely resisted the loss of their lands. One leader, **Geronimo**, continued fighting the longest. In 1876, he assumed leadership of a band of Apache warriors when the government tried to force his people onto a reservation.

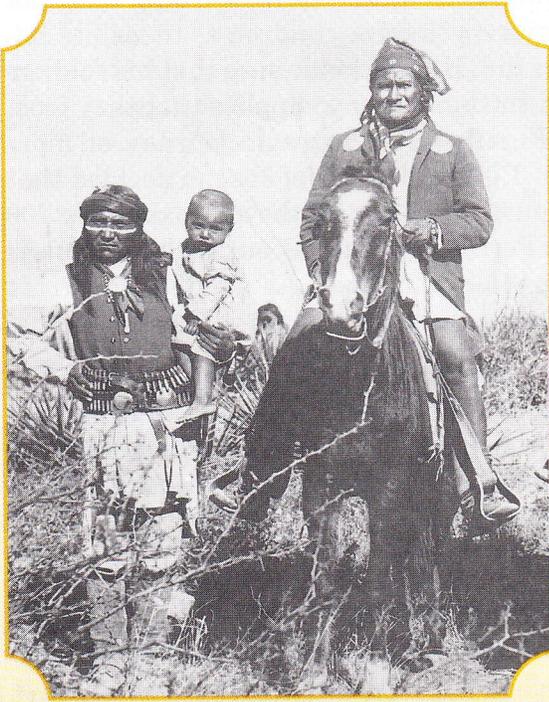
Geronimo waged war off and on for the next ten years. From Mexico, he led frequent raids into Arizona and New Mexico. In the end, 5,000 United States soldiers were trying to capture Geronimo, who, by this time, had fewer than forty followers. Geronimo finally surrendered in 1886. His capture marked the end of formal warfare between Indians and whites.

A Way of Life Lost

Many Indians longed for their lost way of life. On the reservations, the Lakotas and other Plains Indians turned to a religious ceremony called the **Ghost Dance**. It celebrated the time when Native Americans lived freely on the Plains.

The Ghost Dance

In 1889, word spread that a prophet named Wovoka had appeared among the Paiute people of the southern Plains. Wovoka said that the Great Spirit would make a new world for his people, free from whites and filled with plenty. To bring about this new



Biography Geronimo

For many years, Geronimo (on horseback) fought against both Mexico and the United States. He paid a high price for his fierce resistance. At a peace conference in the 1850s, Mexican soldiers murdered his mother, wife, and three children. After he surrendered to the United States Army, he was imprisoned for two years. ★ **Why do you think Geronimo refused to surrender for so long?**

world, all the Indians had to do was to dance the Ghost Dance.

Across the Plains, many Indians began preparing for the new world. Ghost Dancers painted their faces red and put on the sacred Ghost Dance shirt. Some believed that the shirt protected them from harm, even from the bullets of soldiers' guns.

In their ceremonies, Ghost Dancers joined hands in a large, spinning circle. As they danced, they all cried and laughed. A "growing happiness" filled them, said one. They saw a glowing vision of a new and perfect world.

Settlers react

Many settlers grew alarmed. The Ghost Dancers, they said, were preparing for war.

The settlers persuaded the government to outlaw the Ghost Dance.

In December 1890, police officers entered a Lakota reservation to arrest Sitting Bull, who had returned from Canada and was living on the reservation. They claimed that he was spreading the Ghost Dance among the Lakotas. In the struggle that followed, Sitting Bull was accidentally shot and killed.

Wounded Knee

Upset by Sitting Bull's death, groups of Lakotas fled the reservations. Army troops pursued them to Wounded Knee Creek, in present-day South Dakota. On December 29, the Indians were preparing to surrender. As nervous troops watched, they began to give up their guns.

Suddenly, a shot rang out. The army opened fire with rifles and artillery. By the time the shooting stopped, nearly 300 Native American men, women, and children lay dead. About 25 soldiers also died.

The fighting at Wounded Knee marked the end of the Ghost Dance religion. Years later, Black Elk, a former Ghost Dancer, remembered the events at Wounded Knee:

“When I look back now from this high hill of my old age, I can still see the . . . women and children lying [on the ground there]. . . . And I can see that something else died there. . . . A people's dream died there.”

Failed Reforms

The Native Americans were no longer able to resist the government. During the late 1800s, the army forced more Indians onto reservations every year.

Reformers speak out

Many people—Indian and white—spoke out against the tragedy that was occurring. **Susette La Flesche**, daughter of an Omaha chief, wrote and lectured about the destruction of the Native American way of life. Her work led others to take up the Indian cause.

One reformer influenced by La Flesche was **Helen Hunt Jackson**. In 1881, Jackson published *A Century of Dishonor*. The

book vividly recounted the long history of broken treaties between the United States and the Native Americans. In her book, Jackson urged the United States government to end its policy of “cheating, robbing, [and] breaking promises.”

Alice Fletcher was another reformer who worked for the Indians. She became an agent of the Indian Bureau, the government department that handled Indian affairs. To better understand Native American culture, Fletcher lived for a time with various Indian nations, including the Omahas and Winnebagos of Nebraska.

The Dawes Act

Calls for reform led Congress to pass the **Dawes Act** in 1887. The act encouraged Native Americans to become farmers. Some tribal lands were divided up and given to individual Native American families.

The Dawes Act worked poorly. To Native Americans, land was an open place for riding and hunting—not something to divide into small parcels. As a result, Indians often sold their parcels to whites for low prices. In the end, Native Americans lost more than one half of the land that they had owned before the passage of the Dawes Act.

Life on the reservations changed Native American culture. The federal government took away the power of Indian leaders. In their place, it appointed government agents to make most decisions. These agents believed that Native Americans should give up their old ways, including their language, religion, and traditional customs.

Because Native Americans could no longer hunt buffalo, many had to depend on food and supplies guaranteed by treaties. Few Indians were content with life on the reservations.



Ghost Dance shirt

★ Section 4 Review ★

Recall

- Locate** (a) Wyoming, (b) Colorado, (c) Oklahoma, (d) South Dakota, (e) Little Bighorn, (f) Wounded Knee.
- Identify** (a) Sitting Bull, (b) Fort Laramie Treaty, (c) Chivington Massacre, (d) Battle of Little Bighorn, (e) Chief Joseph, (f) Geronimo, (g) Ghost Dance, (h) Sisseton La Flesche, (i) Helen Hunt Jackson, (j) Dawes Act.
- Define** reservation.

Comprehension

- Why did treaties between Native Americans and the United States fail to bring peace to the Plains?

- Why were many Plains Indians attracted to Wovoka’s teachings about the Ghost Dance?
- How did each of the following affect Native Americans: (a) peace commission of 1867, (b) destruction of the buffalo, (c) establishment of reservations?

Critical Thinking and Writing

- Recognizing Points of View** Why do you think the government wanted Plains Indians to settle down and become farmers?
- Solving Problems** What do you think the federal government could have done to avoid wars with Native Americans in the West?



Activity Writing a Poem You are a Native American looking back at the changes that have occurred between 1865 and 1890. Write a poem describing your thoughts and feelings about those changes.



The Farmers



Explore These Questions

- What were the different origins of western farmers?
- Why was life hard for Plains farmers?
- Why did farmers unite in the late 1800s?

Define

- sod house
- sodbuster
- cooperative
- wholesale

Identify

- Mary Elizabeth Lease
- Homestead Act
- Exodusters
- Hispanic-American Alliance
- National Grange
- Farmers' Alliance
- Populist party
- William Jennings Bryan
- William McKinley

As You Read

SETTING the Scene

Like miners and ranchers who arrived before them, farmers dreamed of a new life in the West. Mary Zimmerman and her family were among the first farmers on the Great Plains. She recalled their early struggle:

“The soil was [new]. It had to be broken, turned, stirred, and taught to produce. With the simple means of the time, the process was slow, but . . . I helped my father on the farm and learned to do the work pretty well.”

Later, western farmers would face other challenges. In the 1890s, **Mary Elizabeth Lease**, a fiery Kansas reformer, spoke bitterly of a struggle against low prices:

“We raised the big crop . . . and what came of it? Eight-cent corn, ten-cent oats, two-cent beef. . . Then the politicians told us we suffered from overproduction.”

Farmers Settle in the West

Congress passed the **Homestead Act** in 1862. The law promised 160 acres of land to anyone who farmed it for five years. The government was encouraging farmers to settle the West. It also wanted to give poor easterners a chance to own a farm.

Homesteaders

Many easterners rushed to accept the offer of free land. They planted their 160 acres with wheat and corn. By 1900, half a million Americans had set up farms under the Homestead Act.

The Homestead Act had its problems. The land was free, but poor people did not have the money to move west and start a farm. Also, only about 20 percent of the homestead land went directly to small farmers. Land-owning companies took large areas of land illegally. They divided the land and resold it to farmers at a high price.

Exodusters

African Americans joined the rush for homestead land. The largest group moved west at the end of Reconstruction. At this time in the South, blacks were seeing many of their hard-won freedoms slip away.

In 1879, a group of African Americans moved to Kansas. They called themselves **Exodusters**. They took the name from Exodus, the book of the Bible that tells about the Jews escaping slavery in Egypt.

Some white southerners did not want to lose the cheap labor supplied by African Americans. They used force to stop boats from carrying Exodusters up the Mississippi. Nevertheless, between 40,000 and 70,000 African Americans moved to Kansas by 1881.

Mexicanos

Easterners who moved to the Southwest met a large Spanish-speaking population there. As you recall, the United States had gained the Southwest through the Mexican War. Spanish-speaking southwesterners called themselves Mexicanos. White Americans who lived in the region were known as Anglos.

Most Mexicanos lived in small villages. They farmed and raised sheep for themselves and their families. A few wealthy Mexicanos were large landowners and merchants.

As growing numbers of Anglos settled in the Southwest, they acquired the best jobs and land. Often, Mexicanos found themselves working as low-paid laborers on Anglo farms. Many Mexicanos ended up living in poverty.

Some Mexicanos fought back. In New Mexico, in the 1880s, angry farmers known as “Las Gorras Blancas,” or “White Caps,” demanded fair treatment. They protested the

fencing of their grazing lands by cutting the barbed wire fences of Anglo cattle ranchers.

Other Mexicanos united in political organizations. In 1894, Mexicanos in Arizona founded the **Hispanic-American Alliance**. It vowed “to protect and fight for the rights of Spanish Americans” through political action.

A Final Rush for Land

As settlers spread across the West, free land began to disappear. The last major land rush took place in Oklahoma. Several Indian nations lived there, but the government forced them to sell their land. The government then announced that farmers could claim free homesteads in Oklahoma. They could not stake their claims, however, until noon on April 22, 1889.

On the appointed day, as many as 100,000 land seekers lined up at the Oklahoma border. At noon, a gunshot rang out. The “boomers” charged into Oklahoma, but they found that others were already there.

Viewing HISTORY Exodusters

In this photograph, Exodusters await the arrival of a steamboat to take them up the Mississippi River. Most Exodusters settled in Kansas. African American homesteaders also settled in Nebraska, Oklahoma, and other western states. ★ Why did some white southerners try to prevent African Americans from moving west?



These homesteaders posed for a family picture in front of their sod house. ★ Why did people on the Plains build sod houses rather than wood houses?



“Sooners” had sneaked into Oklahoma before the official opening and had staked out much of the best land.

Hard Life on the Plains

Farmers on the western plains faced many hardships. The first problem was shelter. Since wood was scarce on the Great Plains, many farmers built houses of sod—soil held together by grass roots. Rain was a serious problem for **sod houses**. One pioneer woman complained that her sod roof “leaked two days before a rain and for three days after.”

Sodbusting

The fertile soil of the Great Plains was covered with a layer of thick sod that could crack wood or iron plows. A new sodbusting plow made of steel reached the market by 1877. It enabled **sodbusters**, as Plains farmers were called, to cut through the sod to the soil below.

Technology helped farmers in other ways. On the Great Plains, water often lay hundreds of feet underground. Farmers built windmills to pump the water to the surface. New reapers, threshing machines, and binders helped farmers to harvest crops.

Battling the climate

The dry climate was a constant threat. When too little rain fell, the crops shriveled

and died. Dry weather also brought the threat of fire. In the strong winds that whipped across the land, a grass fire traveled “as fast as a horse could run.”

The summers often brought swarms of grasshoppers that darkened the sky like a storm. Grasshoppers ate everything in their path—crops, food, tree bark, even clothing.

Pioneers dreaded the winters most. With few trees or hills to block the wind, icy gusts built huge snowdrifts. The deep snow buried farm animals and trapped families inside their homes. Wise sodbusters kept enough food on hand to help them survive during a long blizzard.

Women on the Plains

Women had to be strong to survive the hardships of life on the Great Plains. Since there were few stores, women made clothing, soap, candles, and other goods by hand. They also cooked and preserved food needed through the long winter.

Women served their families and their communities in many ways. They often helped with planting and harvesting. Most schoolteachers were women. When there were no doctors nearby, women treated the sick and injured.

Pioneer families usually lived miles apart. They relaxed by visiting with neighbors and gathering for church services. Picnics, dances, and weddings were eagerly awaited events. “Don’t think that all of our time and thoughts were taken up with the problems of living,” one woman wrote. “We were a social people.”



Biography

Mary Elizabeth Lease

Kansas lawyer Mary Elizabeth Lease won fame as an activist for the Farmers' Alliance and Populist party. She was a stirring, dynamic speaker. The way to fight falling grain prices, she told Kansan farmers, was to "raise less corn and more hell."

★ Why were grain prices falling in the late 1800s?

Crisis for farmers

Despite the harsh conditions, farmers began to thrive in the West. Before long, they were selling huge amounts of wheat and corn in the nation's growing cities and even in Europe.

Then, however, farmers faced a strange problem. The more they harvested, the less they earned. In 1881, a bushel of wheat sold for \$1.19. By 1894, the price had plunged to 49 cents.

Western farmers were hurt most by low grain prices. They had borrowed money during good times to buy land and machinery. When wheat prices fell, they could not repay their debts. In the South, cotton farmers faced the same problem when the price of cotton dropped.

Farmers Take Action

As early as the 1860s, farmers began to work together. They learned that they could improve their condition through economic cooperation and political action.

The Grange

In 1867, farmers formed the **National Grange**. Grangers wanted to boost farm profits. They also wanted to reduce the rates that railroads charged for shipping grain.

Grangers helped farmers set up cooperatives. In a **cooperative**, a group of farmers pooled their money to buy seeds and tools wholesale. **Wholesale** means buying or selling something in large quantities at lower prices. Grangers built cooperative warehouses so that farmers could store grain cheaply while waiting for better selling prices.

Leaders of the Grange urged farmers to use their vote. In 1873, western and southern Grangers pledged to vote only for candidates who supported their aims. They elected officials who understood the farmers' problems.

As a result, several states passed laws limiting what could be charged for grain shipment and storage. Nevertheless, crop prices continued to drop. Farmers sank deeper and deeper into debt.

Farmers' Alliance

Another group, the **Farmers' Alliance**, joined the struggle in the 1870s. Like the Grange, the Alliance set up cooperatives and warehouses. The Farmers' Alliance spread from Texas through the South and into the Plains states. In the South, the Alliance tried to bring black and white farmers together. Alliance leaders also tried to join with factory workers and miners who were angry about their treatment by employers.

The Populist Party

In 1891, farmers and labor unions joined together to form the **Populist party**. At their first national convention, the Populists demanded government help with falling farm prices and regulation of railroad rates. They also called for an income tax, an eight-hour workday, and limits on immigration.

Another Populist party demand was “free silver.” Populists wanted all silver mined in the West to be coined into money. They said that farm prices dropped because there was not enough money in circulation. Free silver would increase the money supply and make it easier for farmers to repay their debts.

Eastern bankers and factory owners disagreed. They argued that increasing the money supply would cause inflation, or runaway prices. Business people feared that inflation would wreck the economy.

Rise and Fall of the Populists

The Populist candidate for President in 1892 won one million votes. The next year, a severe depression brought the Populists new support. In 1894, they elected six senators and seven representatives to Congress.

Election of 1896

The Populists looked toward the election of 1896 with high hopes. Their program had been endorsed by one of the great orators of the age—**William Jennings Bryan**.

Bryan was a young Democratic congressman from Nebraska. He was called the “Great Commoner,” because he championed the cause of common people. Like the Pop-

ulists, he believed that the nation needed to increase the supply of money. He often spoke out on behalf of the farmers.

At the Democratic convention in 1896, Bryan made a powerful speech. Delegates cheered wildly as he thundered against the rich and powerful and for free silver.

Both Democrats and Populists supported Bryan for President. However, bankers and business people feared that Bryan would ruin the economy. They supported **William McKinley**, the Republican candidate.

Bryan narrowly lost the election of 1896. He carried the South and West, but McKinley won the heavily populated states of the East.

Populist Party Fades

The Populist party broke up after 1896. One reason was that the Democrats adopted several Populist causes. Also, prosperity returned in the late 1890s. People worried less about railroad rates and free silver.

Still, the influence of the Populists lived on. In the years ahead, the eight-hour workday became standard for American workers. In 1913, the states ratified an income tax amendment. Perhaps most important, the Populists had helped to tie the West more tightly to the politics of the nation.

★ Section 5 Review ★

Recall

1. **Identify** (a) Mary Elizabeth Lease, (b) Homestead Act, (c) Exodusters, (d) Hispanic-American Alliance, (e) National Grange, (f) Farmers’ Alliance, (g) Populist party, (h) William Jennings Bryan, (i) William McKinley.
2. **Define** (a) sod house, (b) sodbuster, (c) cooperative, (d) wholesale.

Comprehension

3. (a) Why did Exodusters move to the Plains?
(b) How did the arrival of white settlers affect Mexicano farmers in the Southwest?

4. Describe three hardships that farmers faced on the Great Plains.
5. Identify and explain two goals that the National Grange and Populist party shared.

Critical Thinking and Writing

6. **Analyzing Primary Sources** An army general wrote to President Hayes, “Every river landing is blockaded by white enemies of the colored exodus.” Explain in fuller detail the event to which the general was referring.
7. **Understanding Causes and Effects** How did the amount of grain that farmers produced affect the price of that grain? Explain.



Activity **Drawing a Political Cartoon** You are a political commentator of the late 1800s. Draw a political cartoon to illustrate one of the problems that farmers faced during this period.