

Plains Indians the beliefs and way of life, changes and destruction

Key dates and events in History

1830 – Indian Removal Act – Indians moved West of the Mississippi River.
1834 – Indian Trade Act – Indian Frontier created between whites and Native Americans.
1851 – Indian Appropriations Act – Indians forced onto Reservations.
1851 - First Fort Laramie Treaty – Indians persuaded to live on reservation in exchange for annuities.
1862 – Little Crow’s War – Santee Sioux starving rose up against white settlers due to lack of annuities and poor land on reservations. Eventually surrendered and sent to even worse reservations.
1864 – Sand Creek Massacre – Colonel Chivington and 1 thousand militia soldiers attacked Indian camp. 150 men, women and children killed. Chivington unpunished. Arapaho attacked white settlements.
1867 – Medicine Lodge Treaty – Arapaho told to move to new reservation in Oklahoma or face US army.
1866-68 - Red Cloud’s War – Gold found in Rocky Mountain. Gold prospectors broke Fort Laramie Treaty.
Red Cloud attacked army forts. Couldn’t capture. Casualties high on both sides.
1868- President Grant’s Peace Policy – Continued reservation process, replaced corrupt Indian agents and placed army officers in charge of areas to protect both Native Americans and White Settlers.
1868 – Second Fort Laramie Treaty – Great Sioux Territory created and Red Cloud agreed to it.
1875 – Destruction of the Southern Buffalo herd completed.
1876-77 - Great Sioux War – Miners found gold in the Black Hills.
1976 – Battle of Little Big Horn – 600 Cavalrymen with General Custer killed by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse.
1887 – Dawes Act – Attempt to turn Native Americans into farmers by making them the owners of 160 acre plots of land aimed at assimilation into western cultures and beliefs.
1890 – The closure of the Indian Frontier – Marked the end of the Native American Indian Nations. Manifest Destiny had been achieved.
1890 - Ghost Dance – Resurgence in Native American spiritual beliefs that ended with Sitting Bull being killed.
1890 Dec, 28 - Wounded Knee Massacre – 146 Native Americans killed by 7th Cavalry.



Key concepts

Manifest Destiny –
Chief – The Elected leader of a native American tribe.
Nomadic – Not living in one place but following food dependant on seasons.
Buffalo – A wild animal hunted by the Native Americans.
Counting Coup -
Spiritualism – The belief system that humans were symbiotic with nature.
Buffalo chips – Buffalo dung used for heating and cooking.
Wakan tanka – The Great Spirit of the Sioux Indians.
Scalping -
Polygamy – Allowed more than one wife.
Black Hills – Sacred land where the Sioux began.
Permanent Indian Frontier – A line that marked the boundary between the lands of the white settlers and Native Americans.
Reservations – Areas reserved for Native Americans which destroyed the idea of the nomadic lives of the native Americans.
Plains Indians – Sioux Indian tribe was based on the Great Plains of North America.

Key People

President Jackson – Signed Indian Removal Act.
Red Cloud – Respected Sioux War Chief.
Little Crow – Dakota Sioux Chief. Killed 600 settlers.
Colonel Chivington – Led 700 cavalry massacre 130 Plains Indians.
President Grant – Took away Indians’ rights.
Sitting Bull – Important Sioux Chief. Refused to live on reservation
General Custer – US Army officer in 7th Cavalry.
Buffalo Bill – Buffalo hunter. Helped exterminate buffalo.
Wovoka - Paiute Indian. Started Ghost Dance.

Development of the plains

Key dates and events in History

1824 – Jed Smith discovers South Pass through the Rockies.

1836 – Oregon Trail opened for wagon use.

1831-47 – Mormon migration Kirtland, Ohio / Independence, Missouri / Nauvoo, Illinois, Great Salt Lake, Utah.

1848 – Great Salt Lake becomes successful for the Mormons (channelled snow melt from the mountains to provide water).

1846 – Donner Party trapped in Rockies, resorted to cannibalism.

1849 – California Gold Rush (population of California from 15 thousand to 250 thousand in 4 years).

1862 – Homestead Act (160 acres)

1862 – Pacific Railroad Act (the Civil War allowed the Union Government to vote for the railroad) They paid companies in bonds worth \$16 thousand per mile for level track and \$48 thousand for mountains.

1866 – Southern Homestead Act. Only freed slaves and whites who had not supported the Confederacy could apply.

1869 – Transcontinental Railroad completed.

1873 – Timber Culture Act. (160 acres if 40 were planted up with trees to tackle the lack of timber on the Great Plains).

1877 – Desert Land Act – 640 acres of land available cheaply where there was low rainfall.

1879 – Dry farming developed in Dakota.

1879 – Exoduster movement. 4 thousand freed slaves moved to St Louis to try and get to Kansas. Most never got much further.

1881 – Last big cattle drive. Refrigerated cattle cars mean that cattle now longer need to be driven.

1886-7 – Winter causes “Great Die Up.”

1893 – Oklahoma Land Rush. (50 thousand settlers waited for 2 million acres of cheap land to be made available through the Indian Appropriations Act).



Key concepts

Land rush – The Government gives land away and people race to claim a piece.

Exodus – Biblical story applied to black migration to Kansas in 1879.

Great Die Up – 15% of cattle died during the very harsh winter of 1886-7.

Abilene – Joseph McCoy founded and invested in the first cow town.

Overstocked – Too many animals living off the same area.

Drought – Lack of rain leads to no water (occurred in the 1890s).

Open range – Unfenced area, cattle allowed to roam free.

Ranch – Fenced area, much like a farm.

Cow town – Towns that sold cattle in large quantities.

Long drive – Cowboys drove herds of cattle from Texas to Kansas.

Texas fever – A disease that killed cattle.

Sharecroppers – Like a tenant farmer who gives proportion of their crop back to the land owner.

Role of women – providing medical aid, cooking, cleaning, looking after homesteads.

Key People

George Donner – Leader of the Donner Party.

Joseph Smith – Original leader of the Mormons. Murdered in 1845.

Brigham Young – A pioneer, who took over from Smith. Led the Mormons to Great Salt Lake in Utah.

Benjamin Singleton – Former slave who created Exoduster movement.

Goodnight and Loving – Created a trail for driving cattle.

Joseph McCoy – Invested money in the cattle town Abilene.

Joseph Glidden – Invented barbed wire in 1874.

John Illif – Discovered cattle could survive a winter on the plains, sold cattle to the Indian reservations.

Conflict on the Plains

Key dates and events in History

1833 – Fence Cutting War 1833 – Barbed wire was used illegally to fence off water holes during droughts leading to shoot outs.

1857 -58 – Mormon War – A non-Mormon governor with 2,500 troops was sent to Utah to replace Brigham Young.

1854 – Bleeding Kansas – Pro and anti-slavery protesters attacked each other following the Kansas (mixed) -Nebraska (anti-slavery) Act.

1862-65 – American Civil War – Southern Confederate states left the Northern Union over the use of slaves to bolster their economy.

1880 – Mussel Slough conflict – Railroad companies forced homesteaders to leave their land after shoot outs and legal cases.

1881 – Gunfight at the OK Corral over who ran the town – Clantons and McLaureys - v – Earp brothers and Doc Holiday left 3 dead and 2 wounded.

1898 – Lincoln County War – Murphy -v- Tunstall business war led to Billy the Kid and the Regulators ending up on the run and 30 people dead including two deputies when the Kid escaped from prison. Very famous.

1892 – Johnson County War – WSGA – v – cattle ranchers / homesteaders. Rustling led to cattle barons sending 50 gunfighters who lynched Averill and Watson. Shoot out led to trial found in favour of gunfighters. Big business won over individuals.



Key concepts

The West – a uniquely armed and conflicted society, short on reliable law enforcement officers, separated by vast distances with a primitive code of honour. Lots of guns.

Mining town violence – Created by the sudden increase of population following gold rushes.

There was little official law and order so vigilante committees were set up.

Claim-jumping – Stealing the land claimed by a gold miner.

Free-soilers – White settlers against slavery.

Sheriff – Elected official. Appointed deputies directly.

City Marshall – Elected official who ran city / town prisons.

Deputy – Worked directly for the sheriff.

US Marshall – Appointed directly by the US President.

Texas Rangers – Small army of lawmen specifically in Texas.

Pinkertons – Private detective agency who acted as mercenary law enforcement.

Cattle rustler – Cattle thieves.

Aurora – Mining town that grew in size rapidly between 1861 and 1864. Laid out on a grid pattern. Led to lawlessness very quickly. 1 church, 25 saloons (bars) and as many brothels.

Massive difference in poverty led to violence.

Vigilante Committee – A committee of citizens set up in Aurora to take law and order into their own hands when the sheriff became ineffective.

Key People

Billy the Kid – Gun fighter who ended up on the run. Killed by Pat Garrett in 1881

Wyatt Earp – Deputy who hunted down the gang that had been involved in the gun fight at the OK Corral. Previously a cattle rustler

Pat Garrett – Sheriff at Fort Sumner who killed Billy the Kid.

John Brown – Anti slavery protester who attacked Potawatomie Creek and Harpers Ferry.

Wild Bill Hickock – Ex Union soldier and gun fighter who became city Marshall in Abilene in 1871. Shot in the back of the head during a poker game.