

## Unit 2

1860s –  
1890s

# Westward Expansion

Americans began expanding into the far West in the 1830s and 1840s, before the Civil War. Many went for land in the Oregon Territory, or were part of the California Gold Rush of 1849. After the Civil War even larger numbers of settlers flooded into the vast western area called the Great Plains.

The Great Plains had once been considered as little more than a dry, treeless wasteland. That view changed, however, thanks to inventions like the steel plow and water pumping windmills. Farms, cattle ranches, and new railroad lines were soon spreading across the Great Plains from Texas to Montana.

This unit tells the story of the farm families, ranchers, cowboys, and railroad builders who settled the Great Plains after the Civil War. We will also see that for one group – the Indians – this era brought tragedy and the loss of their traditional ways of life.

Internet resources:

[www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap](http://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap)

Words and people to know:

Great Plains

Homestead Act

erosion / eroded

steel plows

barbed wire

sod houses

windmills

dry farming

wheat

Transcontinental Railroad

beef cattle

reservations

treaty

Geronimo

Battle of Little Bighorn

Sitting Bull

Col. George Custer

Nez Perce Indians

Chief Joseph

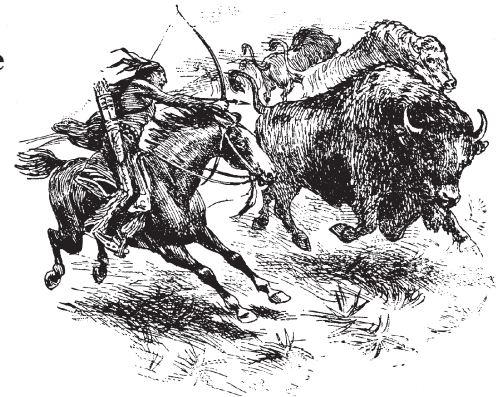
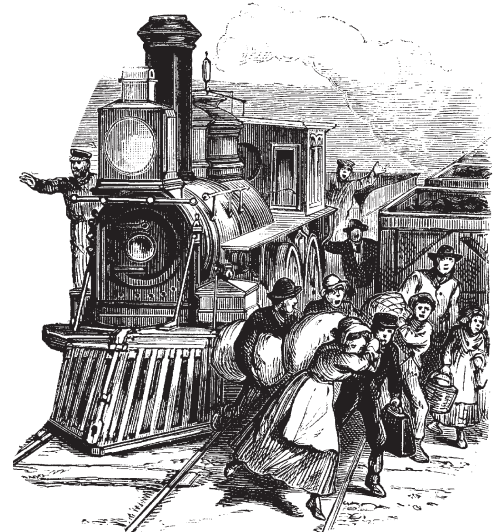
Battle of Wounded Knee

buffalo

assimilation

Dawes Act

boarding schools



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<b>Glossary for Unit 2 Vocabulary Words</b>		

**Internet Support Site: [www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap](http://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap)**

<b>Notes:</b>

# Outline – Westward Expansion

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## 1. Americans spread into the West in large numbers after the Civil War ended (1865).

- A. Opportunities for land ownership.
  - \* The Homestead Act (1862) gave 160 acres of free land.
- B. Technological advances, such as water pumping windmills.
- C. Hope for wealth from gold / silver mining.
- D. Adventure.
- E. A new beginning for former slaves.



## 2. Physical features of the Great Plains:

- A. Flatlands that rise gradually from east to west.
- B. Very dry - low rainfall.
- C. Frequent dust storms.
- D. Land eroded by wind and water.



## 3. The perception (view) of the Great Plains changed after the Civil War.

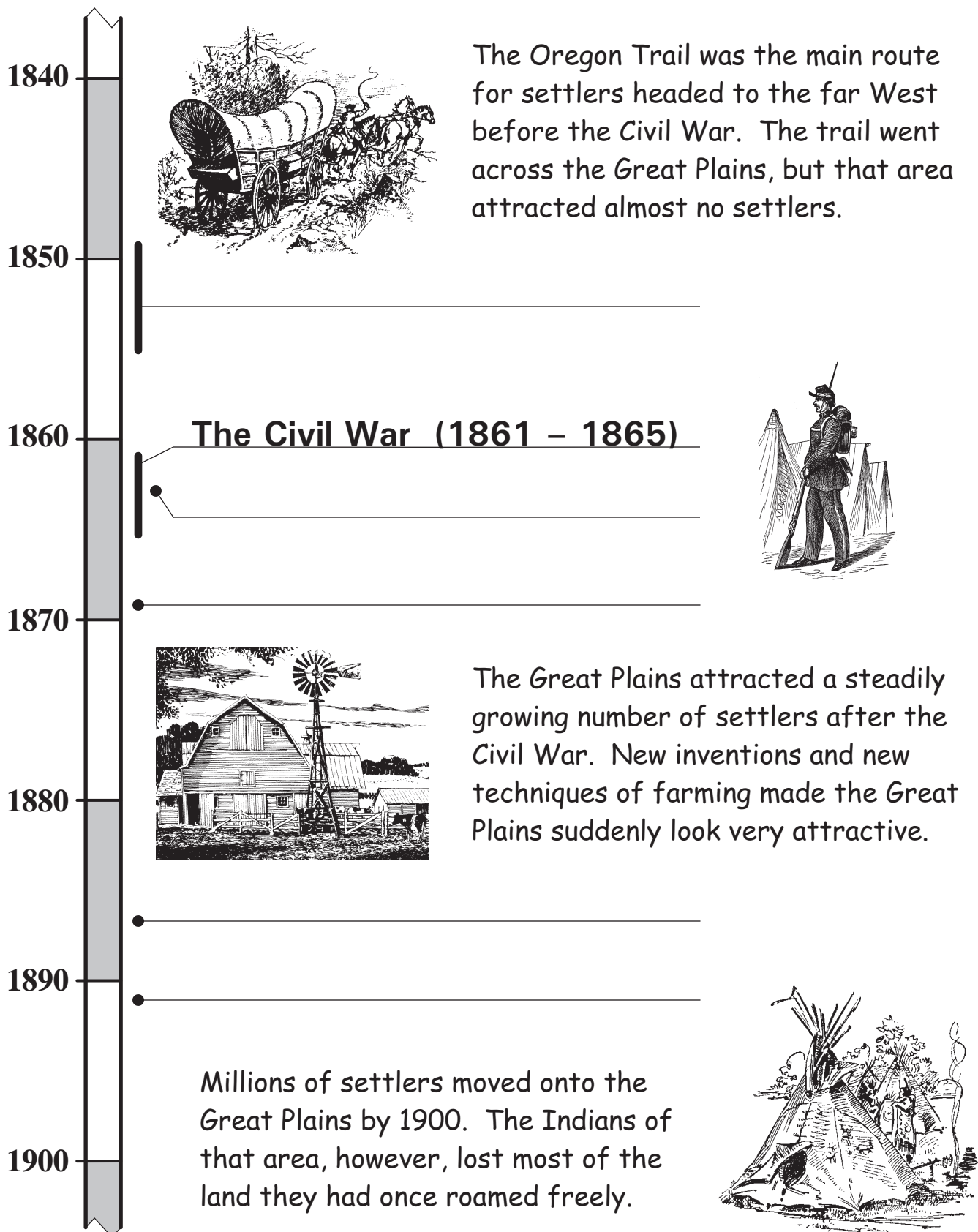
- A. Once seen as a “treeless wasteland,” but increasingly seen as a good place to farm.
- B. Technological advances (new inventions and adaptations) made it possible:
  - \* **Inventions:** railroads, steel plows, barbed wire, windmills.
  - \* **Adaptations:** wheat farming, dry farming techniques, sod houses, beef cattle raising.

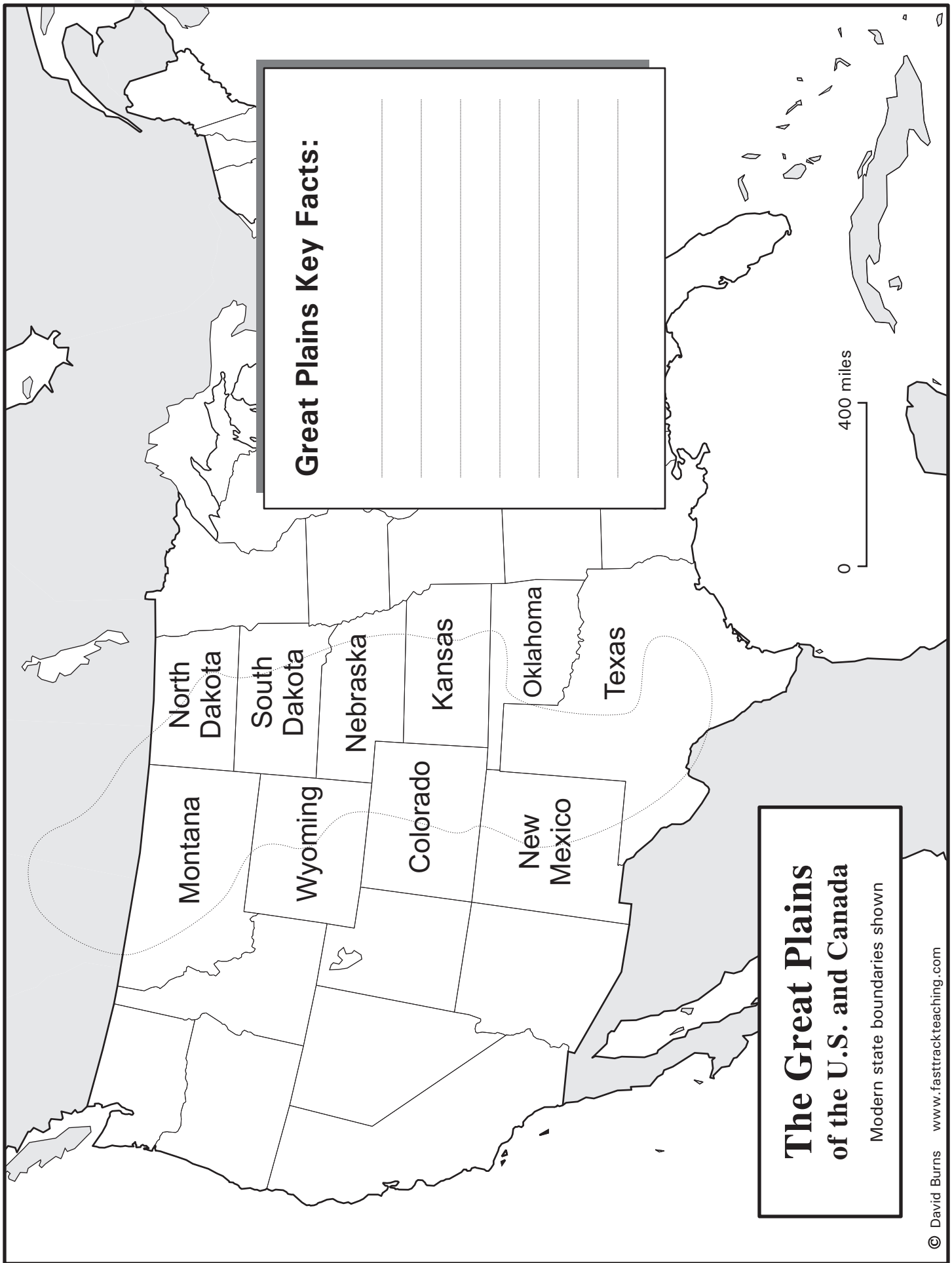
## 4. Settlement of the West created conflict with Indians.

- A. Reservation system - required Indians to stay on specific areas of land.
- B. Indians often resisted the reservation system and settlers moving west.
  - \* Geronimo - Apache Indian famous for raids that killed settlers.
  - \* Sitting Bull - Sioux Indian leader at the Battle of Little Bighorn, an Indian victory over a large group of U.S. soldiers led by Col. George Custer.
  - \* Chief Joseph - Nez Perce Indian leader who refused to move from the land where his ancestors were buried.
- C. Warfare, disease, and reduced buffalo herds reduced the Indian population.
  - \* Battle of Wounded Knee - Sioux Indians massacred by U.S. soldiers.
- D. Assimilation attempts were made to “Americanize” the Indians.
  - \* Dawes Act (1887) - tried to end the tribal system and encourage Indians to become individual farmers owning their own land.
  - \* Indian boarding schools - created to encourage Indian children to adopt American culture and lifestyle.
- E. Broken treaties often reduced the size of Indian homelands.
- F. Many Indians were not considered U.S. citizens until 1924.
  - \* A new law that year declared that any Indians not already U.S. citizens were now citizens.



## Timeline: Settling the Great Plains





### Great Plains Key Facts:

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## The Great Plains of the U.S. and Canada

Modern state boundaries shown

# Reasons for Westward Expansion



There were at least five big reasons why so many Americans headed for the West in the decades after the Civil War ended in 1865.

## Going West!



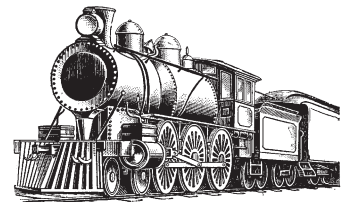
Free or inexpensive land  
(Homestead Act - 1862)



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# Inventions and Adaptations

## Inventions and adaptations that made it possible to settle the Great Plains

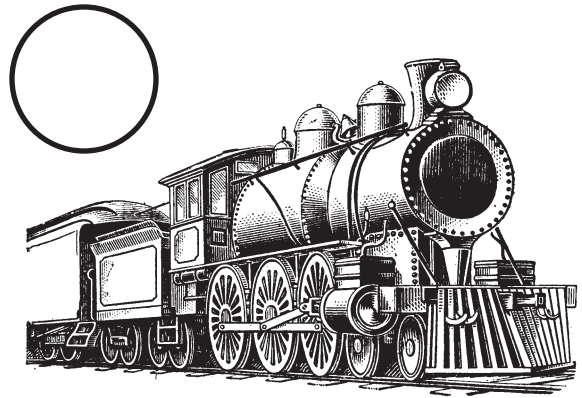
Listed on these two pages are inventions and adaptations that played a key role in the settlement of the Great Plains.

For example, by the 1870s inexpensive windmills were being sold that used wind power to pump water from wells.

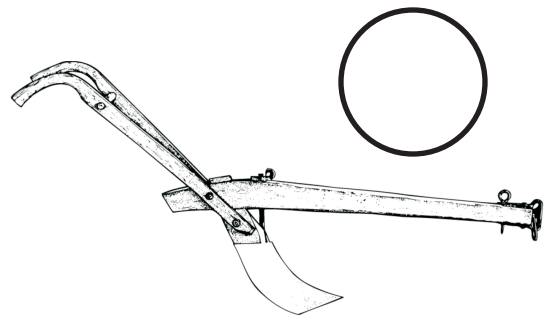
That provided a reliable source of water for farmers and farm animals on the Great Plains, which does not get much rainfall.

Without water pumping windmills and other new technologies, it would have been almost impossible for settlers to succeed on the Great Plains.

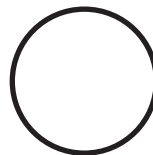
*Label these items with capital letter "I" for inventions, and capital letter "A" for adaptations.*



**railroads** - The construction of railroad lines into the West made it possible for farmers to ship their crops out to distant cities. The new railroads also brought in the products and supplies that farmers needed.



**steel plow** - John Deere invented a way to make a better plow by using a steel blade. The new plow could easily slice through the soil of the Great Plains without clogging up.



**windmills** - new and better windmills were designed to pump water from wells using wind power. These were important for both farmers and ranchers on the Great Plains.

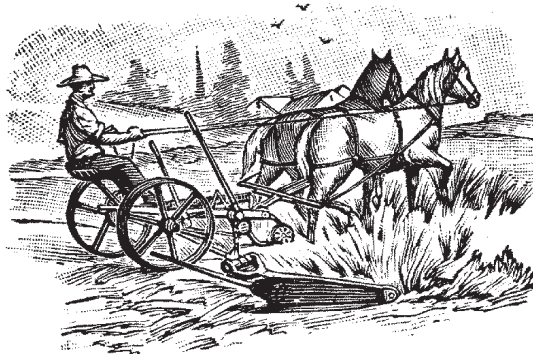


**barbed wire** - In an area without many trees for wood, it provided an easy and inexpensive way for farmers on the Great Plains to fence their land.



**sod houses** - With wood scarce on the Great Plains, early settlers often built their first house out of sod - the top layer of dirt and grass. Strips of sod were cut from the land with a plow, and then stacked to make the walls of the house.

**dry farming** - Farmers had to develop new techniques for growing crops with very little rainfall. For example, farmers on the Great Plains found that it helps to plant seeds a little deeper in the soil. That way the roots can reach down to moist soil quickly.

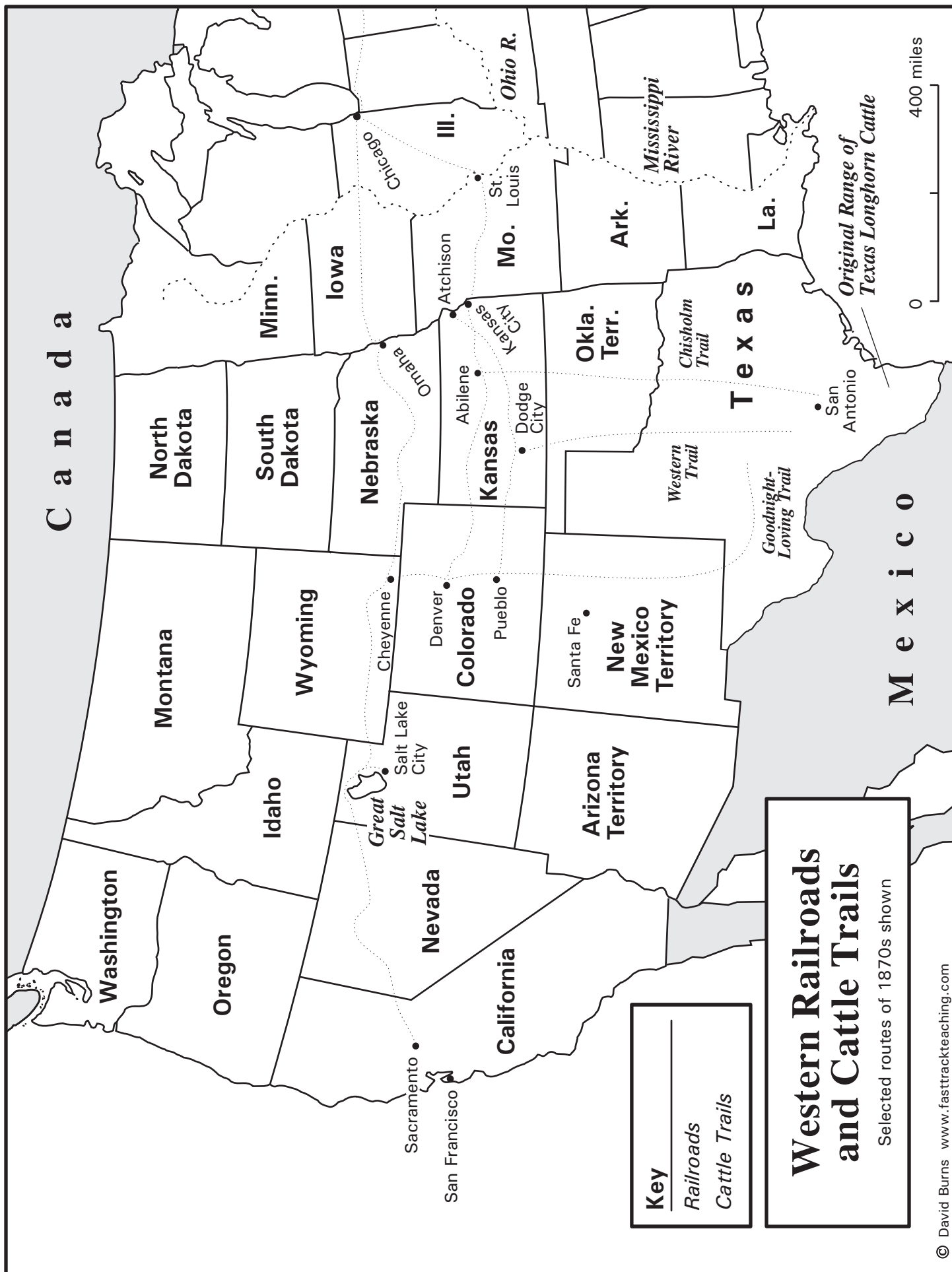


**wheat farming** - Wheat is a crop that does not need much water to grow. It is ground into flour to make bread and other foods. Wheat became the main crop of farmers who settled the Great Plains.

**beef cattle raising** - Ranchers in Texas led the way in greatly expanding the beef industry in the 1870s. The cowboys and the cattle drives of that era quickly became part of the legend of the Old West.









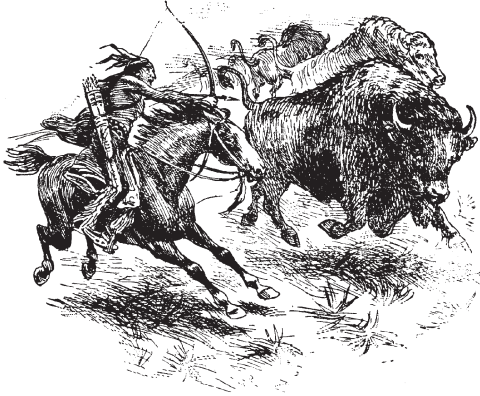
Native American (Indian) life changed dramatically as a result of westward expansion.

## Impact Checklist

**1. The reservation system forced Indians to give up their traditional hunting lands.**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

## Buffalo: Reduced Almost to Extinction



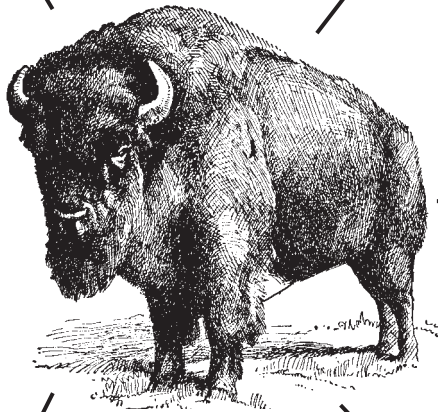
Indians of the West depended on the buffalo in countless ways. The animals provided food, as well as hides used to make clothing and tepees (tents).

Hunting of buffalo by Americans moving into the West dramatically reduced the buffalo herds. The reduction of the buffalo herds gave the Indians little choice but to move to reservations.

The animals were almost made extinct, but today several hundred thousand can be found in the U.S.

**A source  
of food, clothing,  
and shelter**

A buffalo  
can also be  
called a  
bison.



# Geronimo, a Symbol of Indian Resistance

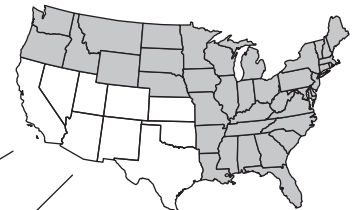


Geronimo was the most famous of the Apache Indian leaders who fought against Mexican, and later, American expansion into Indian lands in the West.

Geronimo's wife and his children were killed by a Mexican army raid on an Apache settlement in 1858. It was part of a back and forth pattern of raids and periods of peace that had been going on for decades. Apaches made deadly raids on Mexican villages as well.

When Americans moved into the West after the end of the Civil War (1865), Geronimo began attacking settlers and U.S. soldiers in the area. His followers believed he had magical powers, such as the power to walk without leaving tracks.

After many years of daring raids and escapes, Geronimo and his small band of followers finally surrendered in 1886 in Arizona. He was later reunited with his relatives, but he was never allowed to return to the Apache lands. Late in life he often appeared in public at fairs and other events. Geronimo is remembered today as one of the last of the Indian leaders to resist American settlement of the West.



*Did you know?*

The name "Geronimo" comes from the Spanish word for "Jerome."

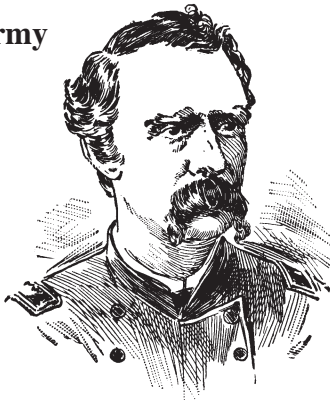


# Battle of Little Bighorn



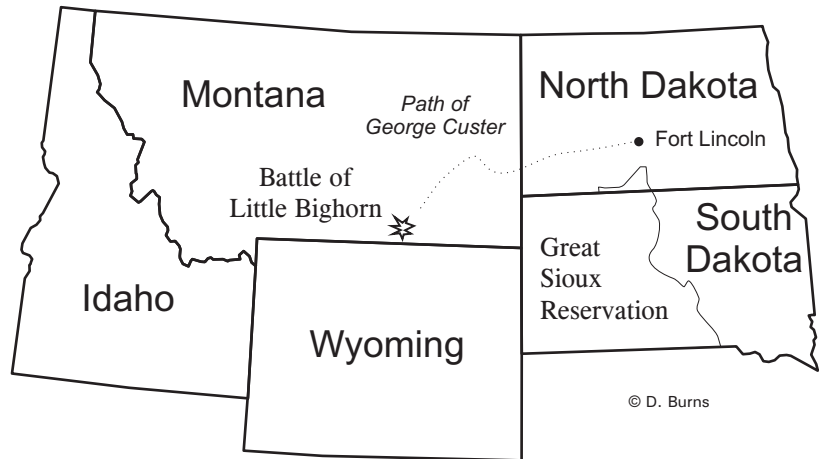
**Sitting Bull**

**U.S. Army  
officer  
George  
Custer**



## *Did you know?*

*The Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876 was the last time an Indian tribe had a major victory over U.S. Army forces in the West.*



The Battle of Little Bighorn is famous as the deadly fight in 1876 that took the lives of Army officer George Custer and over 200 soldiers under his command. For the Sioux Indians of the Great Plains, it was a great but only temporary victory over the U.S. military.

The story began in 1874, when gold was discovered on the Great Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. Many Sioux warriors left the reservation in anger when the American government did not take action to stop gold prospectors from moving onto the Indian lands.

In 1876 these warriors and their families were camped in Montana and following two Sioux leaders, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. Some Indians from other tribes were there as well.

George Custer was one of the Army commanders sent out from Fort Lincoln in North Dakota that summer to force the Sioux and other Indians back to their reservations. As Custer approached the Indian camp at the Little Bighorn River, however, he found himself outnumbered by Indian warriors. Within an hour or two, he and his men were all killed.

The incident led to demands by the public and political leaders for strengthening U.S. Army forces in the West to keep control over the Native American tribes.



# Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians



**Chief Joseph**

The map above shows the path taken by a large group of Nez Perce Indians in 1877 while attempting to escape capture by the U.S. Army. The band of about 800 Indians was resisting a treaty signed by other Nez Perce Indians that called for all of the tribe's members to move to a reservation. The reservation was much smaller than the area an earlier treaty had recognized for the tribe.

Chief Joseph was a leader of the group of Indians resisting the new treaty. General Oliver Howard was the commander of U.S. Army soldiers in the area. He respected Chief Joseph's views, but said he was under orders to use force if necessary to move the group to the reservation. Both men wanted to keep peace, and tried to reach a compromise. The situation turned sour, however, when some young warriors killed four white settlers who had moved into the area.



**General Oliver Howard**

Chief Joseph and his group fled toward Canada, with General Howard and 2,000 soldiers in pursuit. The Indians fought bravely in several battles, but were stopped just short of the Canadian border at the Bear Paw Mountains.

Chief Joseph spoke the famous lines to the right when he surrendered. He and other survivors were relocated to a reservation in Oklahoma, and later to a reservation in the state of Washington.

***"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**

# Battle of Wounded Knee



## Words on the Memorial at Wounded Knee Creek

*This monument is erected by surviving relatives and other Ogalala and Cheyenne River Sioux Indians in memory of the Chief Big Foot massacre December 29, 1890. Col. Forsyth in command of US troops. Big Foot was a great chief of the Sioux Indians. He often said, "I will stand in peace till my last day comes." He did many good and brave deeds for the white man and the red man. Many innocent women and children who knew no wrong died here.*

The Battle of Wounded Knee occurred in 1890 on the Sioux Indian reservation in South Dakota. It resulted in the killing of over 150 Sioux men, women, and children by U.S. soldiers. Often it is called the Wounded Knee Massacre.

The soldiers were guarding a group of about 300 Sioux Indians at Wounded Knee Creek. The soldiers wanted to disarm (take weapons away from) the Indians. They feared the Indians might be planning an armed rebellion.

The Sioux Indians at the camp agreed to give up their guns, but one Indian apparently did not know about the agreement. He refused to give up his gun. In a struggle with several soldiers near him, his gun went off.

At that point, several Indians grabbed guns and began firing, as did the soldiers who surrounded the camp. The situation quickly went completely out of control. Soldiers fired wildly into the Indian camp.

In addition to at least 150 Indians, the battle claimed the lives of 25 soldiers. It is considered by many people today to be a moment of disgrace in American history. The location of the battle is now marked by a memorial to the Sioux Indians who were killed there.

**assimilation** - to blend into another culture, to accept that other culture as one's own.

**barbed wire** - metal wire twisted with short, sharp barbs that made it possible to fence large farms and ranches cheaply.

**Battle of Little Bighorn** - a famous 1876 battle in southern Montana, near the Little Bighorn River. Sioux and other Indian warriors led by Sitting Bull killed U.S. Army officer George Custer and over 200 soldiers.

**Battle of Wounded Knee** - a massacre (killing) in 1890 of over 150 Sioux Indians by out-of-control soldiers near a creek called Wounded Knee on the Sioux Indian reservation in South Dakota.

**beef cattle** - the large animals that are raised and slaughtered to make steaks and hamburger.

**boarding schools** - schools in which the students live, sleep, and eat their meals at the school, rather than return home each afternoon.

**buffalo** - the large animals that once roamed the Great Plains in enormous herds. Buffalo were used by Indians as a source of food, and also for skins used to make clothing and tents.

**Custer, George** - a famous American military leader who was killed, along with over 200 soldiers, by Indians at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876.

**Dawes Act** - a law passed by Congress in 1887 to encourage Indians to leave their tribes and become individual land owners and farmers. Some Indians did so, and received farm land, supplies, and other help from the U.S. government. Most Indians, however, did not want to leave their tribal way of life.

**dry farming** - farming techniques adapted to the climate of the Great Plains, which have little rainfall. These techniques included planting of seeds a bit deeper in the soil, so the plant roots could reach moisture quickly.

**erosion / eroded** - the washing or blowing away of soil, caused by wind or water.

**Geronimo** - an Apache Indian famous for resisting American efforts to force Indians onto reservations, sometimes with deadly raids on settlers. He and a group of his followers finally surrendered in 1886.

**Great Plains** - the flat, grassy, and dry area just east of the Rocky Mountains. It stretches from Texas to Montana, and up into Canada.

**Homestead Act** - a law passed by Congress in 1862 that gave government owned land in the West free to people willing to settle on it. Settlers got 160 acres of land, but had to build a house on the land and stay for five years.

**Joseph, Chief** - leader of a band of Nez Perce Indians living in Oregon that tried to flee to Canada in 1877 after refusing to move to a reservation in Idaho with other members of the tribe. He is famous for his words of surrender in Montana, not far from the Canadian border: "From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

**Nez Perce Indians** - a tribe of Indians living in an area of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Chief Joseph was a leader of one group of the Nez Perce Indians.

**reservation** - areas of land set aside by the U.S. government for Indian tribes to live.

**Sitting Bull** - a famous Sioux Indian who, together with Crazy Horse and others, defeated and killed U.S. Army officer George Custer and over 200 soldiers at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876.

**sod houses** - houses with walls built of layers of sod, often used by early settlers on the Great Plains because wood was scarce. Sod is the top layer of soil, held together by the roots of grass.

**steel plows** - plows that used smooth, polished steel instead of cast iron as the soil cutting blade. These steel plows could slice and turn the soil of the Great Plains easily without clogging.

**Transcontinental Railroad** - the railroad completed in 1869 that connected rail lines in Omaha, Nebraska, with Sacramento, California. The line connected the Eastern states with the West. It dramatically lowered the cost of transporting (moving) people, crops, and supplies.

**treaty** - a written agreement.

**wheat** - a farm crop used to make flour for bread. It does not require as much water as many other crops.

**windmills** - wind powered devices that on many farms are used to pump water from a well.