



SECTION
2

Native Americans Struggle to Survive

Objectives

1. Describe the importance of the buffalo to Native Americans of the Plains.
2. Explain how Native Americans and settlers came into conflict.
3. Summarize the struggles of Native American groups to maintain their traditional ways of life.
4. Explain why Congress passed the Dawes Act in 1887.

Main Idea

Native Americans of the Plains relied on the buffalo to meet many basic needs.

Vocabulary Builder

transform (trans FORM) *v.* to change in appearance or form; to change the condition of something

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Use Restatement Clues Like a definition clue, a restatement clue tells you what an unfamiliar word means. It restates in simple language what the word means. Restatement clues often follow the unfamiliar word, linked by a comma and the word *or*. This textbook often uses restatement clues to define key terms and highlights them in blue.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

transform, p. 584

violate, p. 589

Key Terms and People

travois, p. 584

tepee, p. 584

reservation, p. 586

Sitting Bull, p. 586

★ **Background Knowledge** Mining and railroading brought people to the West and turned it into a booming region. But Native Americans struggled to survive there.

People of the Plains

At the end of the Civil War, some 360,000 Native Americans lived in the West, mainly on the Great Plains. Many, like the Arikaras and the Lakotas, had been there for centuries.

Life in Transition People of the Plains lived by gathering wild foods, hunting, and fishing. Some raised crops. Early Native Americans hunted buffalo and other game on foot. The arrival of the Europeans **transformed** their lives. Plains nations tamed herds of wild horses, descended from tough breeds brought by the Spanish. They also traded with the French and British for guns.

With guns, Native Americans could kill more game. On horseback, they could travel faster and farther. Some groups became wanderers, carrying belongings on **travois** (truh VOIZ), or small sleds. They lived in **tepees**, cone-shaped tents made of buffalo skins.

Many Plains nations followed the buffalo herds. In winter, they trailed the herds into protected valleys and forests. In summer, when grass on the Plains grew tall, hunters tracked the buffalo as they gathered to graze.

People found many uses for the buffalo. Its meat was a protein-rich food. Horns and bones could be made into tools, and tendons could be made into thread. Buffalo hunting thus played a key role in people's survival.



Division of Labors In many Plains nations, women managed village life. They cared for children and prepared food. They carved tools and made clothing and tepees. Sometimes they went to war. In 1876, a Crow woman named The Other Magpie rode against the Sioux for killing her brother. In some groups, a wise woman ruled.

Men were hunters and warriors. Often, they also led religious life. One important ritual was the Sun Dance. The four-day ceremony brought together thousands of Native Americans from many nations. Men would make pledges to the Great Spirit, or ruler of the universe.

Checkpoint Why was the buffalo important to many groups?

Broken Treaties

U.S. treaties promised to safeguard Native American lands. As miners and railroad crews pushed west, they broke those treaties.

Fort Laramie Treaty In 1851, ten thousand people from many Plains nations gathered near Fort Laramie in Wyoming for a "big talk" with U.S. officials. The officials wanted the nations to stop following the buffalo. If they would settle permanently, the government promised to protect their lands "as long as the grass shall grow."

No sooner had some Native American leaders signed the Fort Laramie Treaty than settlers moved onto their lands. In 1859, a gold strike at Pikes Peak in Colorado sent miners swarming to the region.

Main Idea

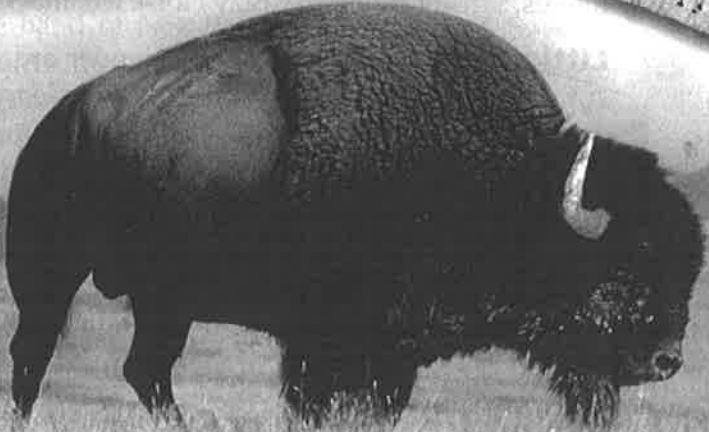
Treaties to protect Native American lands were quickly broken, and wars broke out.

Uses of the Buffalo

The buffalo was central to the life of Native Americans living on the Great Plains. It furnished not only food but also many other necessities of life. **Critical Thinking: Draw Conclusions** Why did the nations of the Plains depend so heavily on the buffalo? How did they cope when the buffalo herds began to disappear?



Covering Tepees Buffalo hides were used to cover the tepees in which the people of the Plains lived.



Keeping Warm The hairy hides of the buffalo provided clothing and warm coverings, such as this Cheyenne robe. Buffalo tendons made a strong thread for sewing garments together.

Biography Quest



Sitting Bull
1831–1890

Sitting Bull's legend as a great Native American leader began at the age of 10, when he killed his first buffalo. During battle, a warrior would try to get close enough to the enemy to touch him. Sitting Bull excelled at this practice, called "counting coup." He was 14 when he touched his first enemy in battle. He soon became a leader known for his fearlessness in battle.

Biography Quest online

What kind of education did Sitting Bull give his children?

For: The answer to the question about Sitting Bull

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Sand Creek Massacre In the early 1860s, new treaties forced Native Americans to give up land around Pikes Peak. Many warriors resisted. They attacked supply trains and homes.

In response, Colonel John Chivington and 700 volunteers attacked a band of Cheyennes at Sand Creek in eastern Colorado in 1864. These Cheyennes were friendly and under army protection. They raised a white flag to signal peace, but Chivington ordered his men to attack. In the end, more than 100 men, women, and children died.

Buffalo Soldiers The Sand Creek Massacre helped to ignite an era of war. Among the soldiers most feared on the Plains were African American veterans of the Civil War. The Native Americans called them Buffalo Soldiers. The Buffalo Soldiers fought on the Plains for 20 years. They also captured bandits from Texas to the Dakotas.

End of the Buffalo The giant herds of buffalo, so central to Native American life, began to shrink in the 1870s. Railroads had hunters kill the animals to feed their crews. Others also slaughtered buffalo because buffalo robes drew high prices in eastern cities. One hunter might kill 2,000 buffalo in a month.

Checkpoint Why did the buffalo begin to disappear?

Main Idea

Warfare continued even as some Native American nations tried to adapt to life on reservations.

Last Stand for Custer and the Sioux

New treaties in the late 1860s sought to end the wars on the Plains. Federal officials urged Plains nations to settle down and farm.

Reservations The southern Plains nations—the Kiowas, Comanches, and Arapahos—moved to reservations in Oklahoma. A **reservation** is land set aside for Native Americans to live on. Life there was a disaster: Poor soil in Oklahoma made farming difficult.

Many Sioux and Cheyennes gathered on land set aside for them in the Black Hills of the Dakotas. An 1874 gold strike brought a flood of miners. **Sitting Bull** and **Crazy Horse** led attacks to keep whites out.

Little Bighorn In June of 1876, under orders to force the Native Americans onto a reservation, Colonel George Armstrong Custer entered the Little Bighorn Valley in Montana Territory. Although outnumbered, he attacked a large band of Sioux and Cheyennes.

Custer and all his men died at the Battle of Little Bighorn. But the victory of **Sitting Bull** and **Crazy Horse** was fleeting. One Sioux recalled, "A winter or so later, more soldiers came to round us up on reservations. There were too many of them to fight now."

Checkpoint Why did Custer attack at Little Bighorn?

Native American Territory



MAP MASTER

Skills Activity

By 1890, most Native Americans had been confined to reservations.

- (a) **Read a Map** During what period did Native Americans lose most of their land in California?
- (b) **Draw Conclusions** How did being restricted to reservations change the way of life of Native Americans on the Great Plains?

MapMaster Online

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Other Efforts at Resistance

Other Native American nations in the West also came under pressure. Among them were the Nez Percés to the north and the Navajos and Apaches to the south.

The Nez Percés The Nez Percés lived where Idaho, Oregon, and Washington now meet. They bred horses and cattle in the Snake River valley. Under pressure, many agreed to go to a reservation.

Rather than see his nation humiliated, Chief Joseph fled toward Canada with a large band of Nez Percés in 1877. The U.S. Army pursued them. In 75 days, the Nez Percés traveled 1,300 miles.

The army caught the Nez Percés near Canada's border. As Chief Joseph surrendered, he said, "I shall fight no more forever."

The Navajos Navajos raised sheep, horses, and cattle in the Southwest. Bands of Navajos also raided settlers' farms for livestock. To stop raids, white settlers called in the army. After a series of wars, the Navajos were defeated in 1864 in Arizona. Soldiers took them on what the Navajos called a "Long Walk" to a spot near the Pecos River. There, they suffered years of disease and hunger.

Main Idea

Efforts by Native Americans to preserve their traditional way of life did not succeed.

Links Across Time

1968 Native Americans demonstrate in the nation's capital against a bill under consideration by Congress.

Civil Rights for Native Americans

1890 Some 200 Sioux were killed by soldiers at Wounded Knee. This incident brought the period of the Indian Wars to a violent close.

1960s Inspired in part by the civil rights movement, Native Americans organized to demand their rights. Groups such as the American Indian Movement sought to remind Americans of the history of broken treaties between Native Americans and the U.S. government.

Link to Today Online

Native American Rights Today Many Native American rights groups now focus their attention on the Supreme Court. What legal issues affect Native Americans in modern society?

For: Native American rights in the news

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The Apaches Fierce resistance came from Apaches like Geronimo, who refused to go to a reservation. From Mexico, Geronimo and his men attacked settlers in Arizona and New Mexico for 10 years. After his capture in 1886, he was sent to a reservation in Oklahoma.

The Ghost Dance Some Native Americans dreamed of returning to old ways. In the late 1880s, Native Americans across the Plains began performing a unique, swaying dance. Dancers fell into a trance, or dreamlike state. They believed they were talking to ghosts of their ancestors, so the dance was called the Ghost Dance. Dancers believed their ancestors and the buffalo would return and white people would leave the Plains. Soldiers guarding reservations saw the dance as the beginning of an uprising. In December 1890, Native American police went to a Sioux village to stop the dances. In a struggle to arrest Sitting Bull, police killed him.

Fearful of further violence, a band of Sioux tried to flee to safety. Army troops surrounded them at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota. As the Sioux were giving up their guns, a shot rang out. The troops opened fire with machine guns and rifles. Nearly 200 Sioux men, women, and children were killed. Some 30 soldiers died.

The Battle of Wounded Knee marked the end of the era of Indian Wars. "A people's dream died there," said one chief.

 **Checkpoint** What was the purpose of the Ghost Dance?

Use Restatement Clues

What is a trance? Use a restatement clue in your answer.



The Failure of Reform

Reformers criticized the government for its harsh treatment of Native American nations. Criticism grew as more groups were forced onto reservations in the late 1800s.

Calls for Reform Susette La Flesche knew all about the calamity befalling Native Americans. Her father was an Omaha chief. In lectures and articles, she told of the destruction of native culture.

In 1881, inspired by La Flesche, the poet Helen Hunt Jackson wrote *A Century of Dishonor*. The book recorded the many treaties violated by the government at Native American expense. Alice Fletcher also promoted native rights. She became an agent for the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, which dealt with Native Americans.

The Dawes Act Hoping to improve Native American life, Congress passed the Dawes Act in 1887. It tried to end Native Americans' wandering and turn them into farmers. Native American males each received 160 acres to farm. The act set up schools to make Native American children more like other Americans.

The Dawes Act failed. Few Native Americans took to farming. Many sold their land cheaply to dishonest whites. Federal agents replaced native leaders, and Native Americans had to give up traditional ways like the buffalo hunt. As a result, they remained poor. Many grew dependent on the government for food and supplies.

Checkpoint What was the purpose of the Dawes Act?

★ Looking Back and Ahead As settlers poured into the West, buffalo grew scarce. Native Americans were moved onto reservations and forced to change their way of life. In the next section, you will read how some of the settlers made a living in the West.

Main Idea

The Dawes Act encouraged Native Americans to become farmers, but it failed.

Vocabulary Builder

violate (vī ah layt) v. to break a rule or law; to disrespect; to disturb

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. **(a) Describe** How did guns and horses change the lives of Plains Native Americans?

(b) Analyze Cause and Effect What were the short- and long-term effects of hunting buffalo on Native American life?

2. **(a) Identify** Who was Chief Joseph?

(b) Detect Points of View In 1879, Chief Joseph appeared before Congress. He said, "Treat all men alike. Give them all the

same law. Give them all an even chance to live and grow. All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief." What was Chief Joseph trying to tell Congress? How do you think members of Congress responded to his words?

Reading Skill

3. **Use Restatement Clues** Use a restatement clue to define the term **tepees** in the following sentence: They lived in cone-shaped tepees, portable tents made of buffalo skins.

Vocabulary Builder

4. Write two definitions for each key term: **travois**, **reservation**. First, write a formal definition for your teacher. Second, write a definition in everyday English for a classmate.

Writing

5. Find three pieces of evidence in this section that support or refute the following opinion: In the nineteenth century, the U.S. government treated Native Americans in an unfair way.