

The Culture of the Plains Indians 2.1

Life on the Plains

Great Plains—grasslands in west-central portion of the U.S.

East: hunting, farming villages; west: nomadic hunting, gathering

The Horse and the Buffalo

Horses, guns lead most Plains tribes to nomadic life by mid-1700s

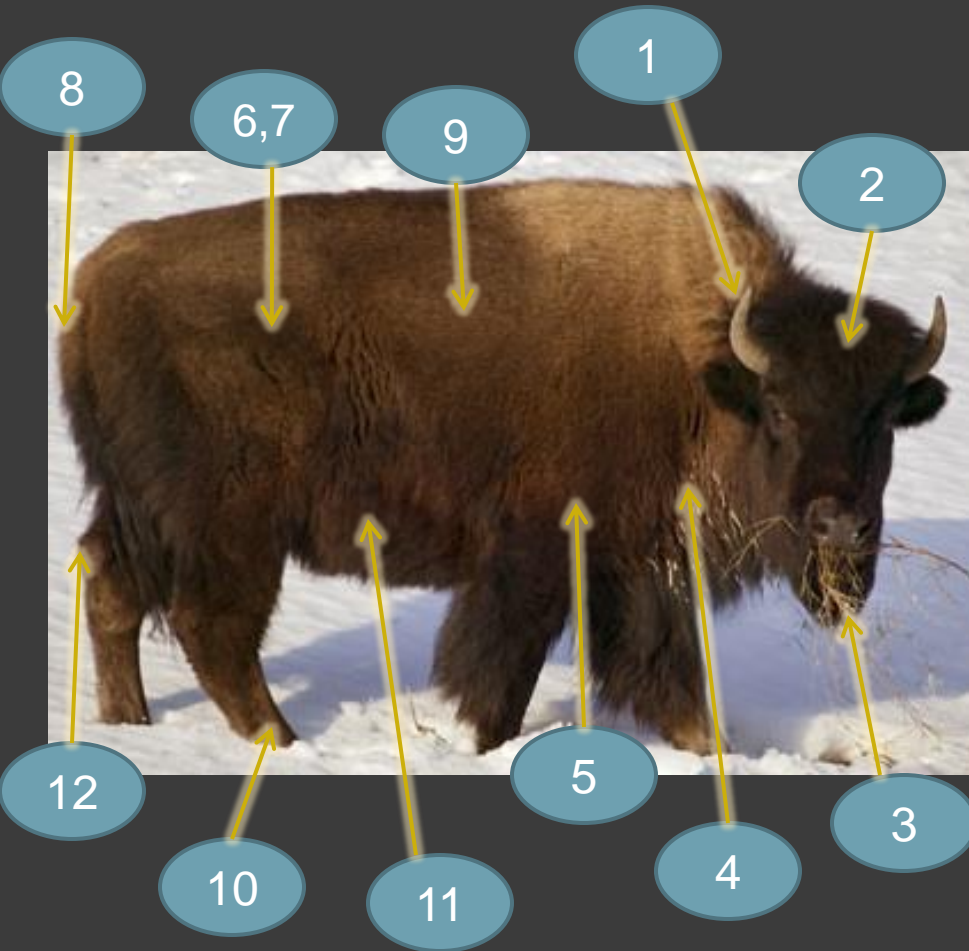
Trespassing others' hunting lands causes war; count coup for status

Buffalo provides many basic needs:

- **worship without formal ministers**

- **meat used for jerky...all parts of the buffalo used.**

Native Americans relied on **buffalo** for many things.



1. **HORNS:** cups, spoons, ladles, headdresses

2. **SKULL:** ceremonies, prayer

3. **TONGUE:** meat, hairbrushes

4. **HAIR:** headdresses, pillows, rope, bridles

5. **BONES:** knives, arrowheads, awls, dice, splints

6. **HIDE (tanned):** moccasins, bedding, clothing, bags, tepee linings

7. **HIDE (raw):** food pouches, headdresses, clothing, glue, rattles

8. **TAIL:** flyswatters, tepee decoration

9. **MUSCLES AND SINEW:** bows, thread

10. **HOOVES:** rattles, glue

11. **PAUNCH:** cooking pots, water container

12. **DUNG:** fuel, signals

Lived in small family groups

Usually with ties to others that spoke the same language.

Men were the hunters and warriors

Women helped prepare the food.

They believed in powerful spirits

Spirit leaders were called shamans or medicine men or women.



The Government Restricts Native Americans 2.1

Railroads Influence Government Policy

1834, government designates Great Plains as one huge reservation

1850s, treaties define specific boundaries for each tribe

Massacre at Sand Creek

Troops kill over 150 Cheyenne, Arapaho at Sand Creek winter camp

Death on the Bozeman Trail

Bozeman Trail crosses Sioux hunting grounds

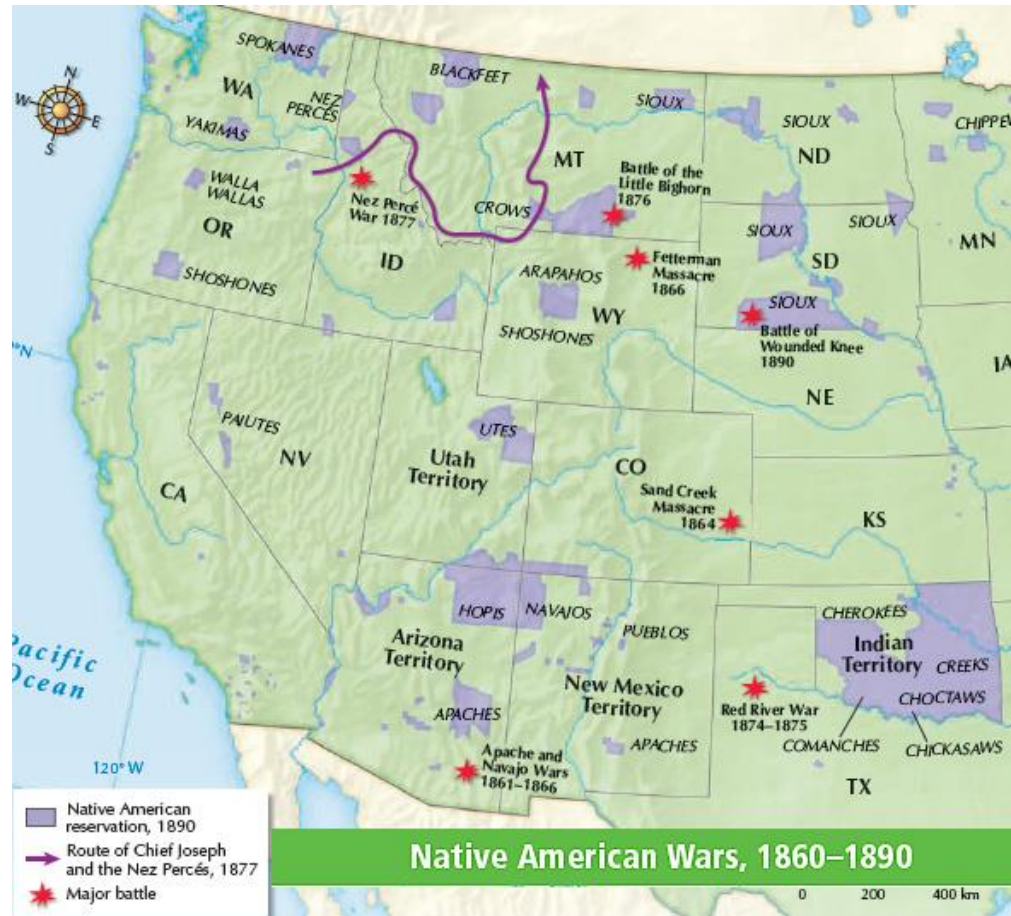
Treaty of Fort Laramie—U.S. closes trail; Sioux to reservation

Sitting Bull, leader of Sioux, does not sign treaty

Red River War

1868, Kiowa, Comanche engage in 6 years of raiding

1874–1875, U. S. Army crushes resistance on Plains in Red River War



Some critics attacked government policies and defended the Indians' way of life.

- **Most leaders, however, hoped that Native Americans would assimilate into American life.**

• In 1887, Congress passed the Dawes Act to encourage assimilation.



**Replaced the reservation system with an allotment system.
Granted each Indian family its own plot of land.
Specified the land could not be sold for 25 years.**

Wounded Knee

Ghost Dance—ritual to regain lost lands

— spreads among Sioux on Dakota reservation

Dec. 1890, Sitting Bull is killed when police try to arrest him

Seventh Cavalry takes about 350 Sioux to Wounded Knee Creek

Battle of Wounded Knee—cavalry kill 300 unarmed Native Americans

Battle ends Indian wars, Sioux dream of regaining old life



The Lure of Silver and Gold

1858 discovery of gold in Colorado draws tens of thousands

Mining camps, tiny frontier towns have filthy, ramshackle dwellings

Fortune seekers of different cultures, races; mostly men

Gold –

Pike's Peak, Colorado 1858

Black Hills, South Dakota

Silver –

Comstock Lode – in Nevada, lasted for more than 20 years! Miners make nearly \$500 million

Placer mining allowed individuals to pan for gold, but soon equipment and different techniques were needed to dig deeper within the earth hydraulic mining and hard-rock mining methods.



Cowboys

American settlers learn to manage large herds from Mexican natives

— adopt way of life, clothing, vocabulary

Texas longhorns—sturdy, short-tempered breeds brought by Spanish

Cowboys not in demand until railroads reach Great Plains

1866–1885, up to 55,000 cowboys on plains

— 25% African American, 12% Mexican

Growing Demand for Beef

After Civil War demand for meat increases in rapidly growing cities

The Cow Town

Cattlemen establish shipping yards where trails and rail lines meet

Chisholm Trail becomes major cattle route from San Antonio to Kansas

The Long Drive

Herding of animals or **long drive** lasts about 3 months

Cowboy in saddle dawn to dusk; sleeps on ground; bathes in rivers

1866-1885 up to 55,000 cowboys on plains

-25% African American, 12% Mexican



By the mid-1880s, however, the cattle boom was coming to an end 2.2

**Reasons the
open- range
system ended**

**The invention of barbed wire made
fencing cheap.**

**The supply of beef exceeded demand
and prices dropped.**

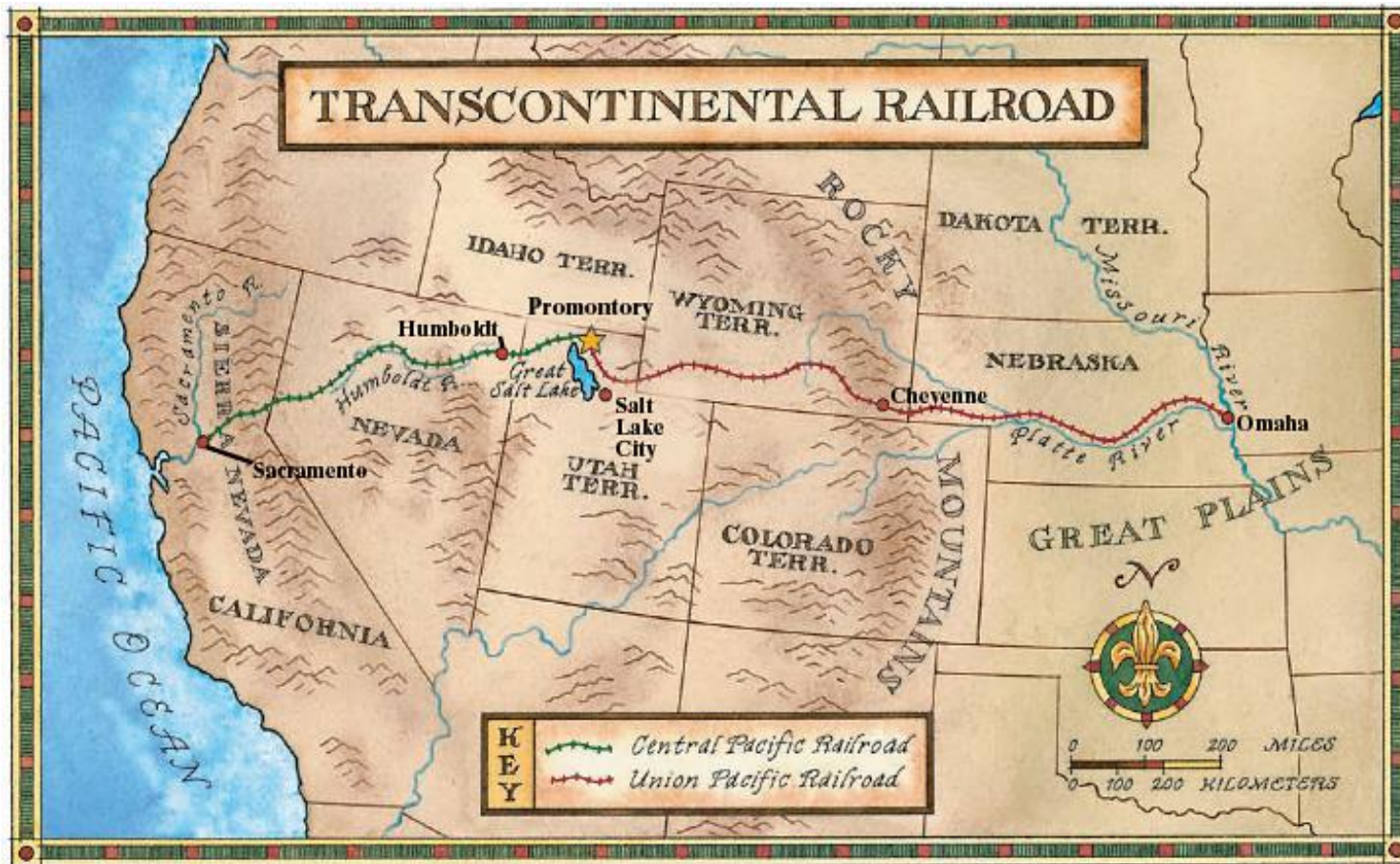
**Extreme weather led to the death
of herds.**

Railroads Open the West

1850–1871, huge land grants to railroads for laying track in West

1860s, Central Pacific goes east, Union Pacific west, meet in Utah

By 1880s, 5 transcontinental railroads completed



Railroads sell land to farmers, attract many European immigrants

Government Support for Settlement 2.3

**Railroad, speculators profit; 10% of land to families
Government strengthens act, passes new legislation
Like miners and ranchers, farmers also moved west,
looking for a better life.**

**Railroad companies
encouraged pioneer
settlement. So did the
government.**



**Under the 1862
Homestead Act, the
government gave 160
acres to farmers
willing to tend it.**

**Easterners, Exodusters, and immigrants soon poured onto
the Great Plains.**

Dugouts and Soddies

Few trees, so many settlers dig homes into sides of ravines or hills

In plains, make soddy or sod home by stacking blocks of turf

- Women's Work-

**Homesteaders virtually alone, must
be self-sufficient**

**Women do men's work—plowing,
harvesting, shearing sheep**

**Do traditional work—making soap,
canning vegetables**

**Work for communities—sponsor
schools, churches**



Mass market for farm machines develops with migration to plains

Agricultural Education

Morrill Act of 1862, 1890 finances agricultural colleges

1887 Hatch Act creates agricultural experiment stations

Farmers in Debt

Railroads, investors create

**bonanza farms— huge,
single-crop spreads**

**1885–1890 droughts
bankrupt single-crop
operations**

**Rising cost of shipping grain
pushes farmers into debt**



Farmers and the Populist Movement 2.4

Farmers Unite to Address Common Problems



Economic Distress

Farmers buy more land to grow more crops to pay off debts

Prices of crops fall dramatically

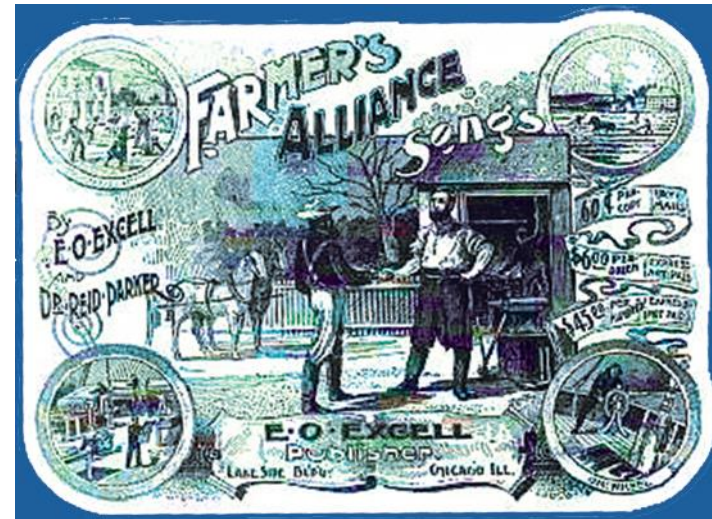
1870s, debtors push government to put more money in circulation

1878 Bland-Allison Act—money supply increase not enough for farmers

Farmers and the Populist Movement 2.4

Farmers created groups to address their problems, railroads and banks.

These groups formed a network called the Granger movement. The Grange was formally organized by Oliver H. Kelley in 1867 and gained a million members.



The Grange declined after the 1870s, but Farmers' Alliances became important reform organizations that continued the Grange's goals.

The Populist Party Platform

Populism—movement of the people; Populist Party wants reforms
Economic: increase money supply, graduated income tax, federal loans
Political: Senate elected by popular vote; secret ballot; 8-hour day
1892, Populist candidates elected at different levels of government
— **Democratic Party eventually adopts platform**



The Panic of 1893

Railroads expand faster than markets; some go bankrupt
Government's gold supply depleted, leads to rush on banks
— **businesses, banks collapse**
— **panic becomes depression (not THE Depression)**

The Rise and Fall of Populism 2.4

Silver or Gold

Political divisions also regional:

- **Republicans: Northeast business owners, bankers**
- **Democrats: Southern, Western farmers, laborers**

Bimetallism—system using both silver and gold to back currency

Gold standard—backing currency with gold only

Paper money considered worthless if cannot be exchanged for metal

Silverites: bimetallism would create more money, stimulate economy

Gold bugs: gold only would create more stable, if expensive currency

Gold Bugs	Silverites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gold standard• Supported by bankers and factory owners• Effects<ul style="list-style-type: none">—Prices fall—Less money in circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bimetallism• Supported by farmers and workers• Effects<ul style="list-style-type: none">—Prices rise—More money in circulation

Bryan and the “Cross of Gold”

1896, Republicans commit to gold, select **William McKinley**

Democrats favor bimetallism, choose **William Jennings Bryan**

Populists endorse Bryan, choose own VP to maintain party identity

Election of 1892

Electoral Vote by State		Popular Vote
DEMOCRATIC* Grover Cleveland	277	5,555,426
REPUBLICAN Benjamin Harrison	145	5,182,690
PEOPLE'S (POPULIST) James B. Weaver	22	1,029,846
MINOR PARTIES	—	285,297
	444	12,053,259

*Electors classed as Democratic were in many states elected on joint Democratic and People's party tickets.



Election of 1896

Electoral Vote by State		Popular Vote
REPUBLICAN William McKinley	271	7,102,246
DEMOCRATIC William J. Bryan	176	6,492,559
MINOR PARTIES	—	315,398
	447	13,910,203



-The End of Populism-

McKinley gets East, industrial Midwest; Bryan South, farm Midwest

McKinley elected president; Populism collapses; leaves legacy:

— the powerless can organize, have political impact

— agenda of reforms enacted in 20th century