

**A Sioux child's doll**



**U.S. troops posing with Hotchkiss guns**

**Russian Fabergé egg**



**1890  
Politics**

Troops of the U.S. 7th Cavalry attack Sioux camped at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota.

**1896  
World Events**

Italy recognizes Abyssinia—modern-day Ethiopia—as an independent nation.

**1905  
World Events**

Czar Nicholas II of Russia institutes reforms after a series of strikes paralyzes the nation.

**1885  
World Events**

King Leopold II of Belgium assumes sovereignty over the African Congo.

**1890  
Business and Finance**

The Midwest is the center of the meatpacking industry.

**1896  
Daily Life**

Americans living in rural areas receive mail delivery for free.

**1890**

**1900**

**1910**

**1886–87  
Daily Life**

Devastating winter storms lash the Great Plains.

**1889  
Daily Life**

President Harrison opens to settlers Oklahoma Territory lands that had been reserved for American Indians.

**1898  
The Arts**

The Royal Italian Opera performs Puccini's *La Bohème* in San Francisco.

**1906  
Science and Technology**

An astronomical observatory opens at Mount Wilson, California.



**Settlers racing to claim land in Oklahoma**

**What's Your Opinion?**

**Themes Journal**

Do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following themes statements? Support your point of view in your journal.

**Economics** The impact that some economic activities have upon the environment is not readily apparent.

**Culture** Cultural differences between groups can lead to misunderstandings and even violence.

**Science, Technology, and Society** Improvements in technology may actually worsen conditions for some laborers.

## SECTION

## 1

## READ TO DISCOVER

1. Why did the U.S. government create the American Indian reservation system?
2. What were the sources of conflict between the Plains Indians and the U.S. government?
3. How did Chief Joseph, Geronimo, and Sarah Winnemucca respond to whites' treatment of American Indians?
4. How did the U.S. government try to assimilate American Indians?

## IDENTIFY

Bureau of Indian Affairs  
 John M. Chivington  
 Sand Creek Massacre  
 Sitting Bull  
 George Armstrong Custer  
 Battle of the Little Bighorn  
 Wovoka  
 Massacre at Wounded Knee  
 Chief Joseph  
 Geronimo  
 Sarah Winnemucca  
 Dawes General Allotment Act

## WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

Many American Indians continue to live on reservations. Use **ON THE GO** or other **current events** sources to find out about American Indians living on reservations today. Record your findings in your journal.



# War in the West

**EYEWITNESSES**  
 to History

*“When I was young, I walked all over this country, east and west, and saw no other people than the Apaches. After many summers I walked again and found another race of people had come to take it.”*

—Cochise, quoted in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, by Dee Brown

Cochise, a Chiricahua (chir-uh-KAH-wuh) Apache leader, mourned over the crisis faced by American Indians as white settlers poured into their homelands. During the 1850s the Chiricahua had permitted settlers traveling to California to pass through Apache lands in what is now Arizona. In 1861, however, a rancher accused the Chiricahua of stealing a child and cattle from his ranch. U.S. Army officials attempted to hold Cochise and his relatives hostage until the child and cattle were returned. The incident led to years of deadly warfare between the Chiricahua and the U.S. government. It also reflected U.S. relations with many Indian nations in the late 1800s.



**A Cheyenne shield**

## Indian Country

By 1850 most American Indians—some 360,000—lived west of the Mississippi River. Some were nomadic hunters and others established more permanent villages. Most American Indians did not own land. Instead they claimed a right to use land in a particular area. The 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie had guaranteed American Indian land rights on the Great Plains. However, as non-Indians moved west, government officials tried to acquire additional Indian lands. They negotiated new treaties in which American Indians agreed to move to reservations. In return, Indians received some money and guarantees that the reservation lands would be theirs forever. These treaties also promised yearly supplies for 30 years.

Some government officials hoped that keeping American Indians on reservations would force them to become farmers and to abandon many of their traditional ways of life. The **Bureau of Indian Affairs** (BIA) was the government agency responsible for managing American Indian issues. BIA commissioner Luke Lea supported the reservation system. He declared in 1850 that American Indians should “be placed in positions where they can be controlled, and finally compelled by stern necessity to resort to agricultural labor or starve.” Other officials recognized the harm this would do to American Indians. Thomas Fitzpatrick was an Indian agent who had helped to negotiate several treaties. In 1853 Fitzpatrick condemned the notion of a reservation system as “expensive, vicious, [and] inhumane.”

American Indians who went willingly to the reservations discovered that the U.S. government often failed to honor its treaties. In addition, the government reduced the size of many reservations as settlers demanded more land. To make matters worse, in many cases the promised supplies never arrived. Government agents often diverted elsewhere the supplies intended for American Indians.

Anger over inadequate supplies and broken treaties exploded into violence on the Santee Sioux reservation in 1862. When a government agent refused to release food supplies even though people were starving, the Sioux attacked the Indian agency and nearby farms and towns. Army troops soon ended the uprising and executed 38 Sioux for their actions. The tribe was relocated, first to the Dakota Territory and then to Nebraska.

**READING CHECK: Analyzing Information** What did the U.S. government give American Indians in exchange for their land?

## Years of Struggle

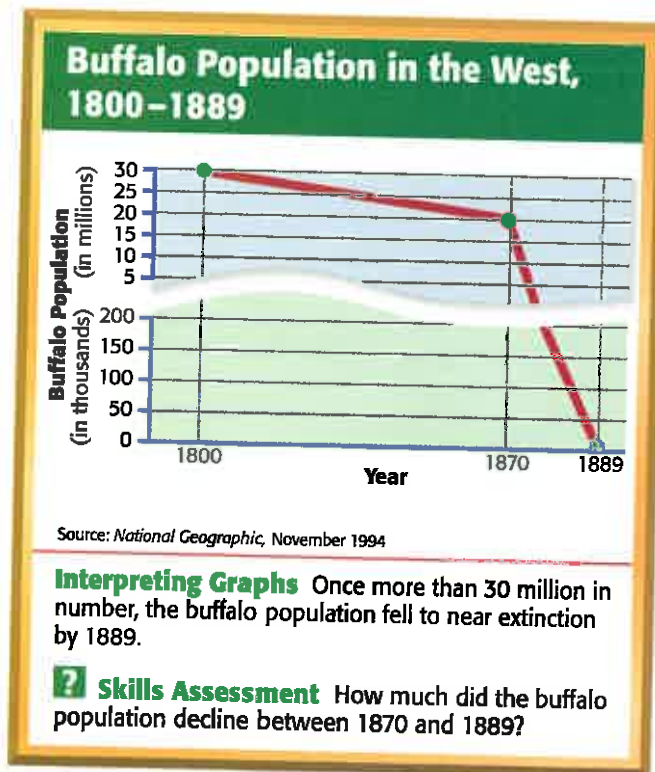
Many Plains Indians, including independent groups of Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Sioux, refused to live on the reservations. The importance to their cultures of following the roaming buffalo herds caused them to reject the restrictions of settled life.

The Plains Indians faced strong opposition. Some 20,000 U.S. Army troops, many of them Civil War veterans, were assigned to confine the tribes to the reservations. The army also enlisted some American Indians as scouts or as soldiers. Struggling to perform their duties, U.S. troops occasionally became involved in violent conflicts with groups of Indians.

**Sand Creek.** One particularly violent confrontation occurred in Colorado Territory. Cheyenne and Arapaho forces clashed with the local militia throughout the summer of 1864. By fall, Cheyenne chief Black Kettle had tired of the fighting. On the way to make peace, his group camped along Sand Creek. While most of the Cheyenne men were away hunting, U.S. Army colonel John M. Chivington and some 700 Colorado volunteers arrived at the camp. Having raised a U.S. flag above his lodge as a sign of peace, Black Kettle reassured his people that they were safe. One eyewitness later recalled, "Suddenly the troops opened fire on this mass of men, women, and children, and all began to scatter and run." Some 200 of Black Kettle's group, most of them women and children, died in the **Sand Creek Massacre**.

Chivington defended his actions, declaring, "It is right and honorable to use any means under God's heaven to kill Indians." However, the slaughter horrified many Americans. A congressional committee investigating the incident called Sand Creek a "scene of murder and barbarity." Shock over the massacre led some members of Congress to call for reform of the government's Indian policy.

News of the Sand Creek Massacre swept across the Plains, prompting raids by the Arapaho and Cheyenne.



### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

**Buffalo.** This painting by John Mix Stanley features a scene of the West. **What does the painting reveal about the techniques American Indians used to hunt buffalo?**

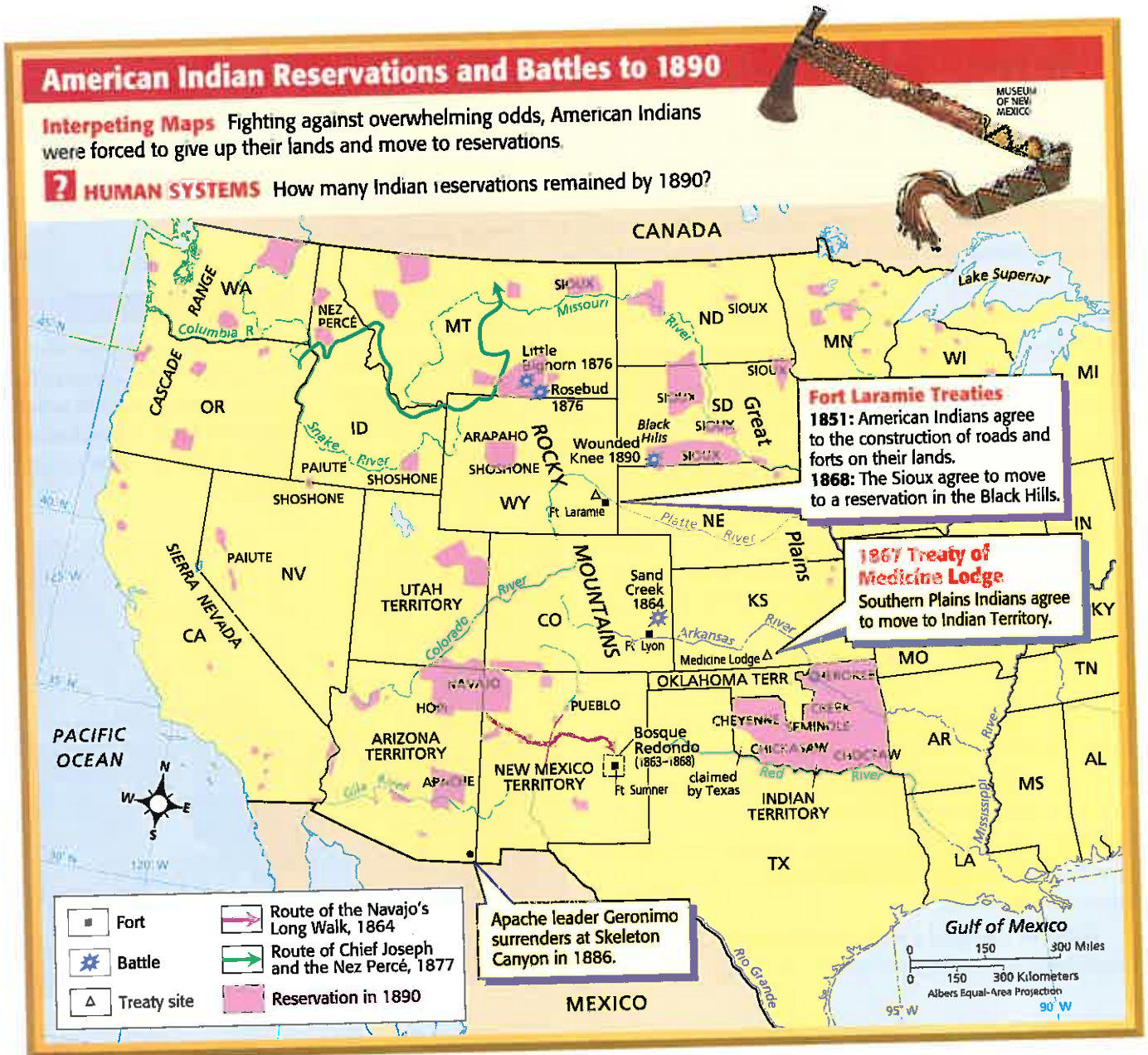




The Sand Creek Massacre shocked many Americans.

The Sioux also stepped up their attacks. To end the fighting, the U.S. government created a peace commission. Meeting with some Indians in 1867, a U.S. senator told them that the buffalo would soon be gone, so “the Indian must change the road his father trod.” One Comanche replied, “I love the open prairie, and I wish you would not insist on putting us on a reservation.” Despite such feelings, tribal leaders signed the Treaty of Medicine Lodge. Southern Plains Indians agreed to give up much of their lands in exchange for reservations in Indian Territory. The following year, in a second Treaty of Fort Laramie, the Sioux agreed to move to a reservation in the Black Hills region of South Dakota.

✓ **READING CHECK: Identifying Cause and Effect** How did the Sand Creek Massacre lead to new treaties?



**Little Bighorn.** The peace was short-lived. In 1874 the government violated the terms of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie by sending an army expedition into the Black Hills to search for gold. Gold was discovered, and the government tried to negotiate a new treaty with the Sioux. The Sioux refused.

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*Sitting Bull*

Tatanka Iyotake, a Lakota Sioux also called **Sitting Bull**, emerged as an important leader of Sioux resistance. He was born about 1831 along the banks of the Missouri River. At age 14 he fought in his first battle, a small skirmish with the Crow Indians. As a result, he earned the right to wear an eagle feather, a symbol of bravery, and was given the name Sitting Bull.

Sitting Bull gained the respect of his people for his courage, wisdom, and generosity. He became known as a spiritual leader and medicine chief. Committed to the

traditional Sioux way of life, Sitting Bull strongly opposed the intrusion of non-Indians onto Sioux lands. He mocked American Indians who had willingly moved to reservations. "You are fools," he argued, "to make yourselves slaves to a piece of fat bacon, some hard-tack [biscuits], and a little sugar and coffee." Many agreed, and by the spring of 1876 thousands of Sioux and their Cheyenne allies were camped on Rosebud Creek in southern Montana.

During that summer, Sitting Bull had a vision in which he saw soldiers descending upon an American Indian village. The soldiers and their horses appeared upside down, which Sitting Bull understood to mean that they would all die. Inspired by this vision, several hundred American Indians rode off to fight U.S. troops advancing toward them. During the Battle of the Rosebud in June 1876, the Indians battled a larger army. Although they did not achieve an outright victory, their performance at Rosebud gave them confidence in their ability to fight U.S. soldiers.

After the battle, the Indians proceeded west to camp near a stream known by the army as Little Bighorn River. They were joined by hundreds of American Indians fleeing the BIA-sponsored encampments, where food was in short supply. By late June the camp contained some 2,500 men prepared to fight.

On the morning of June 25, 1876, Lieutenant Colonel **George Armstrong Custer** and about 600 members of the U.S. Army 7th Cavalry reached the American Indian camp. Although his troops had ridden through most of the night, Custer ordered an immediate attack. After dividing his men so that they could attack from three sides, Custer led a battalion of more than 200 men into the camp. Cheyenne leader Two Moons described the battle: "We circled all round . . . swirling like water around a stone. We shoot, we ride fast, we shoot again. Soldiers drop, and horses fall on them." After the final attack, which lasted less than an hour, Custer and every soldier in his battalion lay dead.

The **Battle of the Little Bighorn** proved to be the last victory for the Sioux. The shock of Custer's defeat prompted the army to increase its efforts to move the

**Research on the ROM**

**Free Find: Sitting Bull**

After reading about Sitting Bull on the Holt Researcher CD-ROM, imagine that you are an author preparing a biography of him. Create an outline that shows the reasons why you think he was a good or bad leader for his people.



**INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD**

**The Little Bighorn.** Kicking Bear created this painting of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. *What do you think Kicking Bear thought of the Battle of the Little Bighorn?*



## George Custer

BY PAUL F. HUTTON

Many Americans were shocked in 1876 to learn of George Armstrong Custer's death at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. A popular figure with the American people, Custer was the subject of magazine articles that celebrated his battles with Indians during the early 1870s. After his death, poets, novelists, and artists responded to the nation's sense of loss with works that portrayed Custer as a hero who gave his life to end the Indians' domination of the American West. The play *Custer's Last Charge* kept the image of the heroic Custer alive during the 1880s and 1890s. In the 1900s, filmmakers produced nearly 20 movies before 1941 that portrayed Custer as a defender of the settlers.

However, some people questioned Custer's reputation. Novels such as Frederic Van de Water's *Glory-Hunter* depicted Custer as a brutal man. Films such as *Sitting Bull* (1954) portrayed the American Indians as courageously defending their homelands against a cruel Custer. Histories that offered the Indian perspective of the wars on the Plains further eroded the Custer myth to such a degree that in 1991 Congress passed legislation removing Custer's name from the national monument at Little Bighorn.

**Some Ghost Dancers believed that Ghost Shirts such as this one protected them from harm.**



American Indians onto reservations. Over the next several months the American Indian forces broke into smaller groups to evade army troops. Group by group, they surrendered and settled near the Bureau of Indian Affairs encampments. Sitting Bull fled to Canada but eventually returned and settled on the Standing Rock Reservation in Dakota Territory.

**The Ghost Dance.** The final chapter of the Plains Indian-U.S. Army wars took place on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Unhappy with life on the reservation, many Sioux accepted the message of **Wovoka** (woh-VOH-kuh). A Paiute, Wovoka began a religious movement known as the Ghost Dance. It featured a dance ritual designed to bring Indian ancestors back to life. Wovoka also claimed that the Ghost Dance could bring about return of buffalo herds and traditional Indian ways of life.

Wovoka's message brought hope to discouraged American Indians throughout the West. Some Sioux living on reservations in the Dakotas wore "Ghost Shirts," believing that the shirts' special symbols could stop bullets.

James McLaughlin, BIA agent at Standing Rock Reservation, dismissed the Ghost Dance as an "absurd craze." However, some government officials feared that it would inspire rebellion. When the Ghost Dance spread to Standing Rock Reservation, the military ordered the arrest of Sitting Bull, who had joined the movement. When reservation police surrounded Sitting Bull's cabin on December 15, 1890, a skirmish broke out and 14 Indians—including Sitting Bull—were killed.

**Wounded Knee.** Frightened and angry after Sitting Bull's death, many Sioux joined the Ghost Dancers farther west. Some traveled with Big Foot, a Sioux leader who had initially supported the Ghost Dance but had gradually turned away from it. Government officials wanted to arrest Big Foot because they feared he might cause trouble. Hoping to avoid conflict with army troops, Big Foot decided to lead his group to the Pine Ridge Reservation. The Sioux made camp for the night along Wounded Knee Creek. On December 28, 1890, army troops found Big Foot and some 350 members of his group.

The next morning, Colonel James Forsyth of the 7th Cavalry ordered the seizure of Indian rifles. Reinforced by four Hotchkiss guns that fired exploding shells, some 500 mounted soldiers surrounded the camp. Dissatisfied with the number of guns the Sioux surrendered, soldiers began to search the tepees. Tensions ran high. The Sioux and U.S. soldiers began shooting. The Hotchkiss guns ripped into the camp. By day's end at least 150 Sioux and about 30 U.S. soldiers had been killed. Some people declared that Custer and the 7th Cavalry had been "avenged," but the **Massacre at Wounded Knee** shocked many

Americans. The incident marked the end of the bloody conflict between soldiers and American Indians on the Great Plains.

✓ **READING CHECK: Summarizing** What events led to the end of conflict between the Plains Indians and the U.S. government?

## The End of Resistance

American Indians west of the Great Plains were also forced to resettle. The Nez Percé tried to remain in their homelands in Idaho, northeastern Oregon, and parts of Washington. They surrendered much of their land in an 1855 treaty and agreed to remain on a reservation. When settlers moved onto reservation land, the Nez Percé did not turn to violence. When the government ordered the Nez Percé to relocate to a reservation in Idaho, their leader, **Chief Joseph**, reluctantly agreed. However, some young Nez Percé killed four white settlers. Fearing war, the Nez Percé fled, with the army in close pursuit.

The Nez Percé journeyed through Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana, picking up followers along the way. The group eventually numbered from 700 to 800. They hoped to escape to Canada, but winter weather made travel difficult. Chief Joseph surrendered to the U.S. Army less than 40 miles from the Canadian border. An interpreter wept as he relayed the leader's surrender statement.



**“I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. . . . It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. . . . My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.”**

—Chief Joseph, quoted at his surrender, 1877

The Nez Percé were first sent to prison in Kansas, then to a reservation in Indian Territory. In 1885 the U.S. government permitted some to return to the reservation in Idaho, but sent Chief Joseph and some 150 others to a reservation in Washington State.

In the mid-1870s, the government forced the seminomadic Apache in New Mexico and Arizona to settle on the San Carlos Reservation, along Arizona's Gila River. When army troops moved into the territory in 1881, Apache leader **Geronimo** fled the reservation with about 75 followers. Geronimo's group raided settlements throughout Arizona and Mexico. In 1884 Geronimo surrendered and briefly accepted reservation life. By 1885, however, Geronimo and more than 130 followers escaped from the reservation and resumed raids on settlements. On September 4, 1886, with his followers outnumbered, Geronimo gave up. “Once I moved about like the wind,” he told his captors. “Now I surrender to you and that is all.” After his final surrender, Geronimo and his followers were sent to Florida as prisoners of war. His surrender marked the end of armed resistance to the reservation system in the Southwest.

# The Religious Spirit

## THE GHOST DANCE

**T**he Ghost Dance combined elements from American Indian religions and Christianity. The son of a medicine man, Wovoka lived for a time with a white family that regularly read Bible passages



A Ghost Dance

aloud. Kicking Bear, who brought Wovoka's message to the Sioux, told them they would be “led by the Messiah who came once to live on earth with the white man.” This reference to Jesus Christ revealed Christianity's influence on Wovoka's thought.

The Ghost Dance was similar to the Paiute round dance. Men and women formed a circle by holding hands and then stepped to the left. Dancers had their faces painted and wore Ghost Shirts—cotton garments decorated with pictures of animals and sacred symbols. The Sioux added features from their own Sun Dance, making the circle around a sacred pole and at times staring into the Sun as they performed the dance.

James Mooney was a social scientist who interviewed several Ghost Dancers in 1891. He interpreted the religion as the spiritual expression of a people whose societies had been devastated. “Hope becomes a faith and the faith becomes a creed [belief] of priests and prophets, until the hero is a god and the dream a religion, looking to some great miracle of nature for its culmination [climax] and accomplishment,” he explained. The Ghost Dance movement faded away when the promised miracle never occurred. ■



**Helen Hunt Jackson's 1881 book chronicled the mistreatment of American Indians.**

## Voices of Protest

By the 1880s, the U.S. government had acquired more than half a billion acres of land formerly occupied by American Indians. Indians also suffered as settlers killed most of the buffalo herds. With the loss of the buffalo, American Indians had little hope of maintaining an independent existence on the Plains. "All our people now were settling down in square gray houses, scattered here and there across this hungry land," recalled Black Elk of the Teton Sioux.

Troubled by the treatment of American Indians, reformers organized groups such as the Indian Rights Association and the Women's National Indian Association. These groups urged the federal government to craft a more humane Indian policy. Helen Hunt Jackson of Massachusetts supported this cause. In 1881 she wrote an influential book, *A Century of Dishonor*, that criticized the government for its years of broken promises and mistreatment of American Indians.

Thoc-me-tony, a Paiute reformer also known as **Sarah Winnemucca**, called attention to the problems of American Indians. Winnemucca noted that although the government had authorized the building of two mills on the Paiute reservation, they were never constructed. She wondered what had happened.



**"The [mills] were never seen or heard of by my people, though the printed report . . . says twenty-five thousand dollars was appropriated to build them. Where did [the money] go? . . . Is it that the government is cheated by its own agents who make these reports?"**

—Sarah Winnemucca, *Life Among the Piutes, Their Wrongs and Claims*, edited by Horace Mann



**Sarah Winnemucca demanded fair treatment for American Indians.**

The forced removal of the Paiute to the Yakima Reservation in Washington Territory in 1878 so outraged Winnemucca that she began lecturing on the Paiute's behalf to non-Indian audiences. In 1880 she asked President Rutherford B. Hayes to allow the Paiute to return to their homelands. Hayes agreed, but the BIA's agents did not carry out the president's order.

**READING CHECK: Categorizing** How did American Indians resist and protest white Americans' treatment of them in the late 1800s?

## Assimilating American Indians

Many government officials and most reformers viewed assimilation, or the cultural absorption of American Indians into "white America," as the only long-term way to ensure Indian survival. To speed this process, the U.S. government established American Indian schools. Some Indian children attended reservation schools, but others were forced to attend boarding schools. Students were forced to speak only English, to wear "proper" clothes, and to change their names to "American" ones. Luther Standing Bear later recalled, "How lonesome I felt for my father and mother!"

Government officials had hoped that life on reservations would force American Indians to become farmers and adopt the lifestyles of non-Indian settlers. In 1887 Congress passed the **Dawes General Allotment Act**, which required that Indian lands be surveyed and that American Indian families receive an allotment of 160 acres of reservation land for farming. Any land that remained



would be sold. The Indian Rights Association claimed that private ownership of land would lead to “the gradual breaking up of the reservations.” This assessment proved correct. In less than 50 years, they lost two thirds of their land. Some of the land was sold to settlers and developers as surplus when allotments were made. In other cases, Indians sold or were cheated out of their allotments.

Despite the government’s hopes, many American Indians rejected individual family farming. Even before the Dawes Act, the government had tried to force the Navajo to abandon sheep raising and become settled farmers. The U.S. Army waged military campaigns against the Navajo in northwestern New Mexico and northeastern Arizona in 1863. Soldiers destroyed Navajo houses, herds of sheep, and corn crops. Without food or shelter, many Navajo surrendered in early 1864.

That same year, the U.S. Army led the Navajo on the Long Walk, a forced march to the Bosque Redondo Reservation in eastern New Mexico. Soldiers stationed at nearby Fort Sumner prevented the Navajo from leaving the reservation. The U.S. government gave the Navajo seeds and farming tools, but the land was not suitable for farming. Because the few trees were quickly cut down, the Navajo had to use roots for firewood. Many Navajo died from malnutrition and disease.

In 1868 the government admitted its failure and granted the Navajo a reservation in New Mexico and Arizona. They rebuilt their communities, concentrating on sheep raising, weaving, and silversmithing. By the 1880s their economy had improved and their population had begun to increase.



**INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD**

**Assimilation.** These photographs show three American Indian boys before and after they attended an American Indian school. *What evidence of their assimilation can you see?*

✓ **READING CHECK: Drawing Conclusions** Why did attempts to force the Plains Indians to become farmers fail?

**SECTION 1 REVIEW**

**1. Identify and explain:**

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- John M. Chivington
- Sand Creek Massacre
- Sitting Bull
- George Armstrong Custer
- Battle of the Little Bighorn
- Wovoka
- Massacre at Wounded Knee
- Chief Joseph
- Geronimo
- Sarah Winnemucca
- Dawes General Allotment Act

**2. Categorizing** Copy the chart below. Use it to describe the conflicts between the United States and various American Indian nations.

Nation & Leader	Conflict	Outcome
Cheyenne		
Sioux		
Nez Percé		
Apache		

**3. Finding the Main Idea**

- a. Why did the U.S. government attempt to resettle American Indians on reservations?
- b. Provide a brief history of the relations between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Plains Indians.
- c. How did American Indians resist attempts to assimilate them into white culture?

**4. Writing and Critical Thinking**

**Drawing Conclusions** Imagine that you are a member of Sitting Bull’s war party. Write a fictional short story about the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

**Consider:**

- what the root causes of the conflict were
- how each side viewed the other
- which mistakes each side made in dealing with the other side

**Go!** **Homework Practice Online**  
keyword: SE3 HP5

## READ TO DISCOVER

1. How did the U.S. government promote economic development in the West?
2. Why did people migrate west?
3. How did the environment influence farming practices and daily life in the West?
4. What difficulties did farm families face on the Great Plains?

## DEFINE

sod houses  
bonanza farm

## IDENTIFY

Homestead Act  
Pacific Railway Act  
Morrill Act  
Exodusters  
Benjamin Singleton  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Willa Cather

## WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

Farming is still central to the economy of the Great Plains states, as well as much of the world. Use [www.ck12.org](http://www.ck12.org) or other **current events** sources to learn about new farming methods being developed today. Record your findings in your journal.

CK12  
Student  
News.com

# Western Farmers

EYEWITNESSES  
History

*“To say that I was homesick, discouraged, and lonely, is but a faint [poor] description of my feelings. . . . Not a tree, plant nor shrub on which to rest my weary eye, to break the monotony of the sand beds and cactus of the Great American Desert.”*

—Annie Green, *Sixteen Days on the Great American Desert*

Annie Green moved to Colorado in 1870. She and her husband were among the thousands of American families who headed west to the Great Plains in the years following the Civil War. Green felt like “a stranger in a strange land” in her new home. In order to support her husband, she “resolved . . . to cultivate [develop] a cheerful disposition.” Like many settlers, Green and her family discovered that hard work, determination, and a little luck were necessary to prosper.



Posters like this one persuaded many people that a better life waited for them out west.

## Economic Development of the West

During the Civil War, Republicans tried to manage western development so that new western states and territories would be free of slavery. They also wanted these areas to be populated by independent farmers who would improve the land. After the southern states seceded from the Union, Republicans passed a series of acts in 1862 to turn public lands into private property.

**Land acts.** Three government land acts increased non-Indian settlement of the Great Plains. The **Homestead Act** permitted “any citizen or intended citizen to select any surveyed land up to 160 acres and to gain title to it after five years’ residence” if the person cultivated the land. The Civil War slowed the initial response to the act. Eventually, some 400,000 families took advantage of the offer. The **Pacific Railway Act** gave lands to railroad companies to develop a railroad line linking the East and West coasts. The **Morrill Act** granted a total of more than 17 million acres of federal land to the states. The act ordered the sale of this land to finance the construction of agricultural and engineering colleges. The Morrill Act led to the eventual founding of more than 70 state universities.

Competition for land was fierce. In March 1889, for example, President Benjamin Harrison announced that land would be available to the first takers beginning at noon on April 22. By the appointed day, about 50,000 people had gathered to race one another for the land. Some rode horses or bicycles. Others pushed wheelbarrows filled with supplies. Subsequent “runs” took place in other parts. In October 1889 a flood of prospective settlers responded to a government offer of inexpensive homesteads in Oklahoma. The acreage came from former Creek and Seminole lands. This occurred at the expense of American Indians, who lost more than 11 million acres in Oklahoma to non-Indian settlers.