

The American West

Topic 1: The early settlement of the West

Topic 2: Development of the Plains

Topic 3: Conflict and compromise

C1876 – c1895



Home revision question and answer booklet

The purpose of this booklet is to support your child with their revision for their GCSE examination.

This booklet is a summary of all the content that your child needs to know and will assist them with regards to preparation for the subject knowledge that they need to apply in the examination. Although the booklet is by no means a guarantee, it will make a significant contribution to their success.

This booklet should be used as a question and answer test booklet so that you can help coach your child into answering content correctly with accuracy. Ideally questions should be worked through at random and use a priority red, amber, green system to prioritise areas to work on.

This booklet is the **minimum**/basic amount of work that your child needs to complete based on the knowledge that they need to have.

I hope that you enjoy using this booklet to help check your child's understanding of the topics that they have completed. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact a link within the faculty using the following email address: humanities-faculty@whickhamschool.org

Many thanks and good luck from the Humanities faculty.

Topic 1: The early settlement of the West

1.1 Plain Indians

Who were the Plains Indians?

- They were many different American Indian tribes that lived on the Great Plains. Some were so large they were called nations. Several of these were sworn enemies – e.g. the Sioux and Pawnee, while others were traditional allies

Plains Indian Society

What was each tribe made up of?

- Each tribe was made up of several bands, and in order to survive it was important that these bands worked together. Different tribes had different ways to organise their bands e.g. the Comanche met frequently, while the Pawnee had separate villages

Who were Chiefs and Councils?

- Chiefs were the leaders of the Plains Indian society. They were always men and each tribe could have many chiefs – spiritual, war or chiefs that negotiated with other tribes.
- There was no single system for choosing chiefs
- Each band had a chief
- Band chiefs and elders made up the tribes council
- Everyone could give their opinion in the council

What were “Warrior Brotherhoods”?

- Within the tribes there was also warrior brotherhoods. Young men joined after proving their bravery fighting other tribes.
- They were important as they trained young men fighting skills
- They were not under the command of the tribal council so did not always respect peace treaties
- Leading members were also selected to join a guard unit for the whole tribe. This organised the yearly buffalo hunt and made sure the old and ill were fed

What was the role of women in Plains Indian Society?

- Men could have more than one wife and women were responsible for feeding and clothing their families. Women were also responsible for processing buffalo hides and meat. Women and their roles were respected very highly.

What were the Great Plains like and how did Indians survive on them?

- The Great Plains had extremes of weather – hot summers, cold winters, strong winds, thunderstorms when it rained and little surface water (rivers or streams). Survival depended upon hunting the buffalo.
- As a result the Plains Indians developed –
 - Amazing horse riding and archery skills
 - A nomadic lifestyle
 - Skills to use every part of the buffalo
 - A deep respect of the buffalo and every other animal they depended upon
 - In the deep winter most tribes moved into lodges – circular buildings made of timber and logs.

Why were horses important to the Plains Indians?

- These were essential to the Plains Indians – they needed them to hunt and travel across the Plains.
- They were also significant for status in Indian society. Men measured their wealth in horses.

What were their beliefs about nature?

- Plains Indians believed that everything in nature has a spirit and that these would sometimes help them.
- They believed that they were part of nature and should work with these spirits, and could contact them through a spirit guide or a ritual dance

What were their beliefs about land and property?

- Land was seen as sacred – the ‘mother’ of the Plains Indians.
- Most of the Plains were difficult to farm so most Indians did not do it and so no one person or family owned this land.

- All tribes did have hunting areas and sometimes treaties were agreed where tribes could share these areas.

What were their attitudes to war?

- Tribes often raided each other for food, horses, weapons and people (women to marry and children to raise in their tribe). However the tribes developed ways to minimise the losses of young men who were killed in raids as they were valuable to the tribe as hunters and protectors. These were –
- Raids were only allowed if they looked like they would be successful
- Only selected brotherhoods could go on raids
- The ‘counting coup’ – this was a special type of fighting in which a warrior would attempt to hit (rather than kill) his enemy and get away without being injured

US attitudes towards Plains Indians

What did they believe/what were their views towards them?

- They did recognise that the Plains Indians had some rights to American land because they had lived on their lands for a long time BUT they thought Plains Indians were savages who did nothing to improve the land
- Essentially White Americans thought that they had better rights to own land because they were trying to improve it through ploughing it for farming etc.
- They believed that White Americans owning the land would lead to a more civilised country

What was the government’s policy towards Plains Indians

The government had two main approaches to tackling this conflict:

1. To keep white settlers and Plains Indians apart
2. To encourage Plains Indians to become more like white settlers

It was very hard to follow both of these points at the same time. The government did a number of things over the years to ‘deal’ with Plains Indians.

What specific policies/ laws did the Government introduce?

What was the Indian Removal Act in 1830?

- It pressured 46,000 American Indians living in the east of America into moving to new lands in the west of the Mississippi River
- President Jackson promised that they would never have to give up on this new land, known as **Indian Territory** and that they would be protected from Plains Indian tribes who already lived there and from white settlers

What was the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act, 1834?

- It said that Indian Territory was ‘all that part of the United States west of the Mississippi [River] and not within the states of Missouri and Louisiana, or the territory or Arkansas’
- It was designed to keep Plains Indians and whites apart and was known as a ‘permanent Indian frontier’
- It stopped whites from settling on American Indian lands, prevented the sale of any guns or alcohol to American Indians by white traders and gave the US Army the role of policing the Frontier
- The Frontier was guarded by a chain of US Army forts connected by a military road

What happened with Westward Expansion?

- After the US won the war with Mexico in 1848, the USA gained new territories in the West, including California. It also now had control over Oregon Country and Texas
- This had a big impact on American Indian Policy as it meant that American Indian lands were in the middle of the USA
- The US government now decided it wanted US citizens to move into its new territories in the West – this meant people needed to cross Indian land
- The government used its army to force Indians to move away from the trail and stop attacking travellers
- This meant the 'Permanent Indian Frontier no longer worked as although it was a boundary, whites now had to cross it'

What was The Indian Appropriations Act (1851)

- This provided money to pay for moving Plains Indians in Indian Territory onto reservations
- Hunting land were also allocated to some reservation, so the Plains Indians could continue to hunt buffalo and other animals

What were reservations?

- They were a continuation of the government policy of moving American Indians away from land that white people wanted to use, but they were something new too
- By reducing the amount of land Plains Indians had available for hunting, the government hoped to encourage them to take up farming so that they could begin to live like white Americans

1.2 Migration and early settlement

What were the 'push' (negative) and 'pull' (positive) factors that encourage white Americans to move West?

Push

- A financial crisis in 1837 meant many Eastern banks collapsed and businesses failed, leading to high unemployment (in some areas as much as 25%). Those who still had a job faced wage cuts of up to 40%.
- The population was growing due to high immigration from Europe, leading to overcrowding in the East. Many people were very poor.
- Land in the east was expensive due to overcrowding.
- Many moved West in the hope of escaping religious intolerance.

Pull

- Gold was discovered in the Sierra Nevada, California in 1848. This led to 200,000 leaving the East in April 1849 in the hope of finding gold.
- Gold prospectors needed equipment, food, drink and entertainment so people moved West to become shopkeepers, bartenders and traders
- Promise of cheap or free farming land in Oregon and California attracted people who were poor and/or jobless.
- The Oregon Trail was the only practical way to get across the mountains with wagons. The route was first publicised by Jedidiah Smith in 1825 and fur trappers began to use the route, clearing scrub and finding the best spots to cross rivers.

- In 1841 a party of 60 people made the trip west using the Oregon Trail, 100 people in 1842 and, in 1843, 900 people. This proved that large numbers of people could make the journey. The 1843 trip was known as the 'Great Emigration'.
- The US government encouraged people to move to Oregon as they wanted to establish it as a US territory instead of sharing it with the British. In 1841 the US government provided \$30,000 for an expedition to map the Oregon Trail and publish reports to help migrants get to Oregon.
- Reports (stories) of how wonderful the west was reached the east. Some of the reports came from missionaries who wanted help, others came from people who wanted to make money from the new settlers.
- The Oregon Trail reports published by John Fremont were very influential and were the guidebook that migrants used on the Trail. It convinced potential migrants moving to Oregon was manageable.
- The government set up boards of immigration, published maps and reports and provided protection for travellers by sending units of the US Army to the West.
- The first migrants to travel the Oregon Trail with a covered wagon reached their destination in 1836. Their success established the Oregon Trail as a route for migrants.
- Even if men were unsuccessful in finding gold, many stayed and became farmers.

What happened with the Gold Rush of 1849?

- In April 1849, 100,000 people left the East to travel to California because gold had been found there the year before
- Travellers travelled along the Oregon Trail, thousands more travelled from all over the world, by land and sea, in the hope of finding gold
- California's population reached 300,000 by 1855

What were some of the positive consequences of the California Gold Rush?

- It promoted the image of the West as the place where individuals could make a success of their lives, get a new start and be free and independent
- Farming in California grew and their excellent farmland meant it was soon exporting food products all over the world
- Money from the Gold Rush helped pay for the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869

What were some of the negative consequences of the California Gold Rush?

- The rapid growth of mining towns led to problems of law and order
- The new migrants murdered or enslaved California Indians to get them out of the way

What does 'Manifest Destiny' mean?

The belief that it was God's will for white people to take possession of the whole of the USA and make it productive and civilised – this was another pull factor to the West. The idea that God wanted them to have the land.

What was the name of the main trail that was used for White Americans to migrate West and how long was it?

The Oregon Trail – 3,200 km long. Started from the Missouri river and ended in the Willamette Valley.

What were some of the things migrants needed to do to survive on the journey?

- They needed to complete their journey before winter otherwise they would get stuck in the mountains and freeze to death

- They tried to start their journey in April so there would be grass on the Plains which would help provide food for their animals
- They needed to take enough food to live on for their whole journey as well as essentials for setting up their new home
- They took salt pork to live off as it lasted a long time
- They picked the best animals to pull the fully-loaded wagons – normally oxen. But - they were very slow and could only move 3km an hour – this meant with an April start time was tight and they couldn't be delayed to ensure that got through the mountains by winter
- Most wagon 'trains' ended up with at least 20 wagons and some had many more. This was the safest way to travel in a big group with people who all had different skills

What were some of the main problems migrants faced on the route?

- Getting stuck, falling ill or running out of supplies: at least 20,000 people are thought to have died on the Trail many from drowning and some from accidents
- The biggest killer was cholera
- Many migrants dreaded being attacked by Plains Indians, but in fact this was quite rare

The Donner Party – you need to know all the story and the outcome!

Describe what the party was like (how many people etc.) and when it began

- There were 300 migrants, in 60 wagons
- They were led by the Donner brothers
- They started the trail late in May 1846
- They were well equipped but the group had more elderly people, women and children than usual

Where had they reach by July and what happened then?

- For Bridger in the Rocky Mountains
- The group split
 - 80 migrants decided to try a new shortcut that left the Oregon Trail

What was the name of this shortcut and where had it come from?

- It was called the 'Hastings cutoff'
- It had been written by a man called Lansford Hastings and described the road as 'fine' with plenty of grass and water
- Migrants didn't know that Hastings had not used the short cut himself – he simple thought it should work

What were the problems with shortcut?

- It wasn't short – it caused delay after delay
- The trail had never been used to it was not marked out – the land was rugged and rocky with steep slopes and canyons
- The party found it hard to cross the river because the route had never been used there were no river ferries
- There were stretches with no water or grass for the animals or travellers

What position had they got to by mid-October?

- There were lots of arguments over whether to keep going or turn back
- They reached the Sierra Nevada Mountains
- Snow storms came and trapped them

What happened to the Donner Party?

- Their livestock died
- Their food ran out
- By 15 December a migrant had died of starvation
- When rescuers from California reached the party in February only half of the original 80 were alive – most of those who survived had only survived through eating those that died

The Mormons – again you need to learn the story and outcome!

Who were the Mormons?

- They were a religious group that were shunned by other Christians for their beliefs such as polygamy (where a many could marry several wives at once)

Why did they migrate?

- They were forced to move around a lot due to growing opposition everywhere they went
- In 1845 they were ordered to leave Illinois after rioters murdered their leader Joseph Smith
- Their new leader Brigham Young, believed God had called on the Mormons to migrate to Salt Lake Valley, south of the Oregon Trail and build a settlement there
- At the time – this valley was outside of American territory and they hope they could escape persecution there

How did their migration start in 1846?

- Young wanted Mormons to make their migration West in the Spring of 1846 when the weather was better but growing hostility mean they had to start in February when it was still bitterly cold
- They could only travel slowly due to the weather and it took until June to complete the first stage of their journey
- They got to Omaha – the starting point of the Oregon Trail and Young decided it was too late in the year to travel so they waited until the following spring

What happened on their journey in 1847?

- They started in April 1847 with a small party of around 150 Mormons, led by Young
- They sent an advance party first with Young which had lots of food for a year and a portable boat to help with river crossings
- The advance party marked out the best route for the rest of the party who would follow and worked out the best places to cross rivers
- The advance party also planted vegetable crops along the way to help the rest of the party
- When Young and his party reached Salt Lake Valley in July 1847 another much larger wagon train of 1,500 Mormons were just setting off on the route the advance party had taken – thanks to the advance party their journey was straightforward

When did the second group arrive and how many were there?

- August 1847 and by 1869 70,000 Mormons had followed the Mormon Trail to the Salt Lake Valley

Why was Brigham Young’s leadership so important in the success of the migration?

- He led the advance group to prepare the trail to Salt Lake Valley and he planned carefully for how the second, much larger wagon trail should take the trip
- Young organised a count of all the Mormons and wagons that were available and planned out the logistics carefully in terms of what each person needed to survive
- Young consulted with trail guides and explorers to find out as much about the Salt Lake Valley as he could – he wanted the Mormons to be as prepared as possible to make a success of their new home
- The migrants were divided up into manageable groups, each with a leader. This meant that even if groups were separated on the journey everyone would still know what to do
- Young insisted on strict discipline, giving everyone a specific role. As a result, there were none of the arguments that had caused a lot of problems with the Donner Party.
- Young ensured that each group had the right mix of skills to survive
- Young taught the migrants how to form their wagons into a circle at night – this meant they could keep their livestock safe from attack or from getting lost
- Regular resting places were planned along the route. This ensure that people did not exhaust their livestock which again had been a problem for the Donner Party.

How did the Mormons overcome the problems with the land in Salt Lake Valley – salty lake and poor land you couldn’t grow on?

- They worked together well for the good of the community as they believed Young was God’s prophet and they should obey him completely
- They built irrigation systems than ran into the Great Salt Lake so they had water to grow crops
- They split up responsibility in the settlements for each group to design and be responsible for different products like food crops, minerals and timber – Young again made sure there was a good mix of people with different skills
- They spread out and away from the Salt Lake Valley into areas with more reliable water supplies

What were some of the problems that faced migrants who had moved to the West and what solutions did they use to overcome them?

Water shortages: water was scarce so it was hard to keep clean, cook food and water crops.	Wind pumps: The Homesteaders build wind pumps which used a turbine to bring water up from deep underground.
Growing crops: crops where hard to grown on the plains due to the weather conditions.	Red Turkey Wheat: They used this crop to grow in the West as it could cope with extreme temperatures. Grow a surplus and extra crops to make sure they would have enough.
Fuel: lack of wood meant there was nothing to burn to help keep warm and to cook with.	Buffalo chips: The Homesteaders copied the Indians and burnt Buffalo dung for fuel.
Natural hazards: insects would eat crops and it was easy for a fire to start in the hot summer days.	Nothing: There was nothing you could do to stop natural hazards like insects and fire due to hot dry days.
Building materials: lack of wood on the Plains and it was too expensive and difficult to get timber to the Plains.	Sod House: They built their homes out of sod (earth/soil) and when the railway was built it meant that some could afford to buy wood to build with.
Dirt and disease: easy to catch a disease from the sod houses which were hard to clean as well as bugs, mice and snakes.	Women: They would try their best to keep the sod house clean and tried to make herbal medicines when people were ill.

Protecting crops: animals could trample all over the crops as there was nothing to use to build fences.	Barbed wire: Invented in 1874 and could be used to fence off land.
Weather extremes: it was really hot during the day and really cold at night. Also there could be strong winds that would damage crops and homes.	Dry Farming: When there was heavy rainfall or snow the farmers would plough their land to trap the moisture into the soil.
Ploughing: difficult to plough hard dry soil with thick grass roots which could easily break the equipment they brought with them to the plains.	New Technology: New machines made of steel were stronger and could have parts replaced if broken. (Sod buster)

1.3 Conflict and Tension

Why was there tension between white settlers and Plains Indians?

- Life was very difficult due to the harsh environment of the West which made both white settlers and Plains Indians wary of each other
- Conflict was unavoidable for Plains Indians because resources were scarce and raiding other tribes for good, horses and people was an important survival strategy – sometimes (less often than you'd think) white settlers would get caught up in this
- White settlers held strongly racist views about American Indians. At the same time they were very scared of them – in particular of them attacking their settlements and scalping them = scalping was where they would cut off the hair and skin from the top of an enemy's head as a trophy and a sign of bravery
- They didn't understand each other's way of life so this led to mistrust
- Because of the Gold Rush and how many migrants travelled on the Oregon Way the migrants disrupted buffalo hunting – this hugely impacted on the Plains Indians as it was key to survival
- Because migrants brought lots of oxen with them which ate the grass this led to shortages of food for the Plains Indians' horses too

The Fort Laramie Treaty (1851)

What was the aim?

- The aim of the government was for the tribes to agree to a treaty that would end conflicts between the tribes and guarantee safe access for migrants across Plains Indian lands
- They also wanted to get tribes to agree to live in fixed territories

What were the problems in getting the argument?

- The government negotiators wanted each tribe to name a chief who would represent the whole tribe. Plains Indian society didn't work this way though and often tribes would nominate a respected warrior or several warrior brotherhoods though which frustrated negotiators

- Although large numbers of Plains Indians had come, some tribes did not attend. Most of the Plains Indians who did attend too had no real interest in the council or its decisions –they just wanted food and gifts from the government
- The government and negotiators wanted to pin down and draw precise boundaries but Plains Indians travelled far and wide to hunt and these boundaries didn't support their way of life
- The treaty was written in English and there wasn't enough translators to make sure that all the Plains Indians understood it

When was the Treaty signed?

- 17 September 1851

What were the terms of the treaty for the Plains Indians and the government?

<p>Plains Indians would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End the fighting between tribes - Allow migrants to travel through their lands safely - Allow railroad surveyors from railroad companies to enter their lands safely - Allow the government to build roads through their land and construct army posts - Pay compensation if an individual from their tribe broke the Treaty terms (eg. By attacking migrants) 	<p>The US government would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect Plains Indians from white Americans (including migrants trying to settle on Plains Indian land) - Pay the tribes an annuity (a yearly payment) of \$50,000 as long as the Treaty terms were kept to
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Why was the treaty significant?

- It took the first step towards reservations
- It undermined the 'Permanent Indian Frontier' by stating that migrants had to be allowed to travel safely across the Plains
- The government introduced compensation for the Plains Indians – this was used as a form of blackmail or bargaining tool to try to get them to "behave"

Problems with the Treaty?

- Because there was no real 'leader' in each tribe, although the Treaty had been signed each band would make a decision over whether to follow it or not. Even where a chief had signed it – there was not the belief that one man should represent the wishes of the whole tribe
- Not all the Plains Indians knew what they had signed up to due to the language barrier and also different understandings of what land as property meant
- There was real confusion over the boundaries and many saw them as pointless

Results of the problems with this treaty

- Neither side had any lasting success sticking to it
- Plains Indians continued to fight each other
- Migrants did not stick to the Oregon Trail but trespassed on Plains Indians land

Problems with law and order in early towns and settlements

Impact of mass settlement

- Population increased rapidly which put pressure on the existing systems
- Gold prospectors gathered in camps and camps could grow by the thousand really quickly which again caused problems
- 'Claim jumping' became common where people would try to steal land that had been claimed by someone else
- Mining camps attracted people looking to make money from illegal methods
- There were prostitutes and people selling alcohol in the mining camp which led to drunken fights between men
- Many men carried guns so violence was common
- Prospectors came from all over the world, so mining camps mixed different ethnicities and different religions and this led to tensions and triggered violence

What were the problems with the Geography of the West and funding?

- Because of how much land there was in the West, territories were huge areas with scattered settlements
- Even counties were often very large: a Kansas sheriff's county typically covered 200,000 km squared
- Before the late 1860s, horseback was the fastest way of travel, so news of trouble took a long time to reach law officers, and then it took a long time for officers to get to where they were needed
- Even with deputies, there was not enough law officers for effective law enforcement
- The federal government did not spend much on the territories so law enforcement was badly paid
- As a result, it was hard to recruit new officers and many were *corrupt** – accepting money from criminals to avoid arrest, or taking a cut from criminal activities

What were the problems with law enforcement in the West?

- The government decided on the laws for each territory. There was a system to deal with law and order in place, even if it was complicated and didn't always work. For example, they appointed a governor for the territory, three judges to hear court cases and a US marshal who was responsible for law enforcement. The marshal could appoint deputies to help him and could also order any man to join a posse* to hunt down lawbreakers
- Once a territory had a population of 5,000 people, communities could elect a sheriff for their county. The sheriff had similar powers to a US marshal for this county area. Sheriffs were usually chosen for their ability to calm people down and break up fights. However, they had no legal training but kept law and order as best as they could. Because they had no legal training, sheriffs did not always act fairly, favouring their friends over other people. This injustice increased tensions

- New towns did not always have easy access to a legal system of judges and courts in order to settle disputes. So, towns got together to agree and write down the rules that would govern their district. A recorder was chosen to record all the claims that were made and who had claimed them
- The community also created its own court, with a respected community member chosen to judge the disputes
- Juries were often appointed as well. However, this self-made system created its own problems and didn't necessarily deal with problems fairly, or well

What were the problems with vigilantes in the West?

- One way the West was controlled was through vigilante committees, or vigilantes. These were groups of ordinary people who punished suspected lawbreakers themselves instead of relying on the normal justice system (usually because it wasn't working.)
- The idea of vigilante committees spread quickly through these towns. Miners were fed up of road agents, horse thieves and other criminals and felt they had no other choice but to tackle criminal behaviour
- Once vigilante committees had been organised they were very effective. They identified their suspects, tried them and, often, hung them. Warnings would appear around the camp so that any remaining troublemakers knew to clear out

What were the problems with racism in the West?

- Racist attacks increased as a result of mass settlement in California, especially against American Indians and Chinese migrants. In 1852 a famine in China led to a huge increase in Chinese migrants coming to California which made the problem worse. In this instance there were 2,000 Chinese migrants in California in 1851 and 200,000 in 1852
- Unfortunately, the government was also racist. White Americans were encouraged to murder Californian Indians and laws were passed that discriminated against Chinese migrants. For example, California's state government passed a law that taxed Chinese miners more than the US citizens, and another law saying that Chinese people could not be witnesses in court. (the same was true for black Americans and American Indians)
- Chinese migrants were treated in other awful ways too. For example, they were not allowed to make a claim on new land and any money they made was often stolen by white Americans
- This racism became an accepted part of society in the West

Topic 2: The early settlement of the West

2.1 The development of settlement in the West

What was the civil war?

- In 1861 the long running dispute over slavery between the northern and southern states of the USA came to a head.
- The North wanted to either limit or abolish slavery.
- In the South, slavery was a key part of the economy.
- In April 1861, shortly after the election of anti-slavery Abraham Lincoln as President, fighting broke out.
- The war was to last for 4 years and had a significant impact on the development of the West.

Why was the war significant?

- During the war, regular troops were withdrawn from service in the West.
- As you will see later in the course, this had a disastrous effect on relations with the Indians.
- The southern states had blocked development of the West.
- When they withdrew from the Union, it paved the way for new legislation to build railroads across the USA.
- The end of the war saw a new wave of settlers pour onto the Plains

What were the consequences of the civil war on the West?

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What happened with movement West after the end of the civil war?

- When the Civil War ended it left a lot of ex-soldiers wanting a new life.
- There were also 3.5 million freed slaves who wanted to escape oppression in the south.
- Southerners who had lost out in the war moved West to get away from the victorious Northern government.
- The US government started to encourage people to move west with incentives.

What was the Homestead Act (1862)?

- This allowed homesteaders to claim 160 acres of land free if they lived and worked on it for five years. The prospect of free land was very attractive to people who could **never** have afforded a farm back home

What were the strengths of the Homestead Act?

- The Homestead Act was relatively successful. By 1876, over six million acres of land had been 'claimed'
- it encouraged immigration from Europe
- people began to settle permanently on the Great Plains for the first time

What were the limitations of the Homestead Act?

- Despite many homesteads being 'claimed', 60% of homesteads were never 'proved up'. This is mainly due to the difficulties of farming on the Great Plains
- Rich landowners often made their employees file claims and then forced them to hand over the land to them. This was problematic as the government had aimed to create lots of individually owned farms, instead of the land being owned by just a few rich owners
- Finally, some people would file a claim to get cheap land and then sell it to others for profit. Again, this went against government wishes for landowners to work their land themselves.

What was the idea behind the Pacific Railroad Act (1862)?

- The Pacific Railroad Act facilitated the creation of the First Transcontinental Railroad, a huge railway line that connected the east of the USA to the west. Prior to the American Civil War, disagreement between the northern and southern states prevented the creation of this railroad.
- The northern states supported the railroad as it connected California to its big industrial cities. However the southern states recognised that an east to west railroad would be of no benefit to them, and would actually put them at a disadvantage.
- Therefore, like the Homestead Act, the Pacific Railroad Act was only passed once the southern states left the USA to form their own confederacy.

What did the act do?

- The Act divided the huge job of constructing the railroad between two companies – the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific

- The Central Pacific Railroad would start at Sacramento and build east, and the Union Pacific Railroad would start at Omaha and build west
- The two would then meet in the middle to form the Transcontinental Railroad
- The Pacific Railroad Act stated that the government would loan each company \$16,000 per miles of track (\$48,000 for mountain areas) and would terminate any rights Plains Indians had to the land along the railroad

Problems with the act?

- Both companies found the task very difficult. It is thought around 12,000 men died in the process of building the railroad.
- Furthermore, both companies nearly went bankrupt and sometimes resorted to lying about how much track they had laid in order to get more government money.

What was the Timber Culture Act of 1873?

- It became clear that 160 acres of land was not sufficient to support a family on the Great Plains
- The government therefore passed the Timber Culture Act of 1873, which gave homesteaders an additional 160 acres of free land if they agreed to plant trees on 40 acres of this
- It became clear that 160 acres of land was not sufficient to support a family on the Great Plains. The government therefore passed the Timber Culture Act of 1873, which gave homesteaders an additional 160 acres of free land if they agreed to plant trees on 40 acres of this. Trees were important as they were needed to supply wood for fuel and building material, and also acted as windbreaks

Did the act work?

- The act was met with limited success, and was repealed (got rid of) in 1891
- In much of the Great Plains it was simply not possible to grow trees, as there was not enough water
- Loopholes in the act were also exploited as people claimed land to simply sell it on for profit

Further problems with law and order

What were 'Hell on Wheels' towns?

- New towns that were created by the railroad

What problems did Abilene experience with law and order?

- Abilene was first settled in 1856
- As Abilene grew it attracted small businessmen to the area who established saloons, brothels and various stores. It also became the source of a great deal of crime and lawlessness. In an attempt to restore order, Tom Smith was appointed marshal of Abilene in June, 1870. Smith immediately announced that it was now an offence to carry guns within the city.
- Although he carried a gun, Smith attempted to enforce the law with his fists. His decision to ban guns was unpopular with some members of the community and during the next few months he survived two assassination attempts. As a result of his ability to maintain law and order, Smith was also appointed under-sheriff of Texas.
- On 2nd November 1870, Tom Smith was sent to a small settlement 10 miles from Abilene to arrest Andrew McConnell, a man charged with murder at Detroit. McConnell shot Smith and his friend, Moses Miles, killed him with a blow to the head with an axe.

- Wild Bill Hickok was now chosen as the new marshal of Abilene. He was paid \$150 a month plus a percentage of the fines. Hickok also received 50 cents for every unlicensed dog he shot. Hickok did not take his duties seriously and spent most of his time playing poker. Hickok was eventually sacked by the city council in 1872 when he killed a fellow lawman in a gunfight.
- The city council now decided to take a different approach and decided to ask the Texas cattlemen to stop bringing their cattle to Abilene. This they decided to do and Abilene's reputation as a lawless town came to an end.

Why did the Civil War have an impact on law and order?

- There was a large number of army deserters and because of the arrival of large numbers of ex-soldiers in the West after the war
- Gangs were often made up of ex-soldiers – many of whom were traumatised by the war and resentful about their experiences
- In many places because the war had had such a big impact law enforcement was too weak to control them

Who were the Reno Gang and what did they do?

- They were a group of civil war deserters, con-men and thieves who terrorised communities in the West
- They bribed law officers to avoid arrest
- They carried out a series of train robberies between 1866 and 1868
- They were arrested after their fifth attempt and they were lynched by a vigilance committee in the end

How much of a problem was lawlessness in the West?

- Lawlessness happened when big social changes like a booming population meant that local community found it harder to enforce the law
- State and federal law enforcement officers did struggle to enforce the law or to have the resources to do this themselves
- Victims of lawlessness had to meet force with force by hiring a tough sheriff or town marshal to keep the peace or by having a private police force
- **Most places in the West were not lawless – even in the wildest cow towns murders were rare**
- But – things like theft were common and it was hard to punish and catch thieves

2.2 Ranching and the cattle industry

Who were the first people to settle on the Great Plains?

Cowboys and cattle ranchers were the first group of European settlers to move permanently onto the Great Plains.

Why and how did cattle ranching develop on the Great Plains?

What were the origins of the cattle industry 1820 – 65?

- Ranching first started in Texas, with ranches mostly manned by Mexican cowboys called vaqueros
- In 1836 Texan ranchers drove many Mexicans out, and claimed the cattle left behind

- The Civil War started in 1861, and Texans went off to fight. The cattle roamed free as huge herds grew up. On returning home, the Texans started rounding them up and driving them to sell in places such as New Orleans and California

1865 – 1870: what were the 'long drives' and the first 'open range'?

- Realising that there was a great demand for beef in the north of the USA, the Texans drove their cattle north on a long drive to Sedalia in Missouri, where they were loaded onto trains for Chicago
- Two Texas ranchers, Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving, pioneered a second trail, to Denver in Colorado, where they sold their cattle to gold miners
- In 1868, a rancher named John Iliff (the 'cattle-king of the northern plains') won the contract to supply beef to the Sioux, who had been forced onto a reservation in the Black Hills
- A safer drive (the Chisholm Trail) was established to Abilene. This was set up by Joseph McCoy as a 'cow-town', with railroad stockyards (and numerous saloons where the cowboys could spend their wages)
- John Iliff was the first rancher to set up an 'open range' ranch - in Wyoming in 1867

1870 – 1885: what was the 'open range'?

- There were huge areas of 'open range' - unfenced land which was free for anyone to use
- Charles Goodnight is reputed to have invented the crazy quilt (by buying small patches of land here and there over an area, he could effectively control all of it)
- Refrigeration cars on trains opened a world-wide market for beef
- By 1885, just 35 cattle-barons owned 8 million hectares of range, and owned perhaps 1.5 million cattle

1885 – 1890: why did the 'open range' end?

- Ranchers had over-grazed the plains. Overstocking had also led to a fall in prices
- In spring 1886 there was a drought, followed by a scorching hot summer (up to 43°C). This was followed by a winter storm in January 1887, in which the temperature dropped to -43°C. Half the cattle on the plains died in a single year
- More and more homesteaders were coming onto the plains, and fencing off their farms with barbed wire (patented in 1874)

Why and how were certain individuals important in the cattle industry?

Why was Joseph McCoy and Abilene important?

- In 1867, Joseph McCoy created the cow town Abilene. In the westward zone of Kansas, Abilene served as a transit point for cowboys and their herds
- In 1867, Joseph McCoy created the cow town Abilene. In the westward zone of Kansas, Abilene served as a transit point for cowboys and their herds.
- Abilene was the ideal location for several reasons.
 - Firstly, there was plenty of grassland and water for the herds. Secondly, Kansas' quarantine law allowed Texas herds to settle there as long as they were far enough away from the homesteaders to prevent disease spreading.
 - It was near the Chisholm Trail, which was a cattle trail that cowboys could use to drive their cattle directly from Texas to Abilene.
 - Finally, it was near a railhead so cowboys could transport their cattle to the northern states via railroad if they wished.
- McCoy developed the cow town quickly. He bought lots of land, built a hotel, and built large stockyards to keep the cattle.
- He also spent \$5,000 marketing the new cow town so cowboys would know to come.

- McCoy was hugely successful; between 1867 and 1872, three million cattle were driven along the Chisholm Trail.

What was the Goodnight-Loving Trail and why was it important?

- The Goodnight-Loving Trail was a cattle trail from Texas to the new populations in the West. Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving established it in 1866. The Navajo Indians, who were being kept in a reservation near Fort Summer, were close to starvation due to poor government planning. Goodnight and Loving drove thousands of cattle north to the reservation to sell cattle to the starving Indians for a huge profit. This was the beginning of Goodnight's incredibly profitable cattle career.
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- The Goodnight-Loving Trail was dangerous. It passed through hostile Indian Territory and attacks from Plains Indians were frequent. In 1867, Oliver Loving died from a Comanche attack. However, Goodnight continued to drive cattle along the trail and sold huge numbers of cattle to John Illif who had recently created the open range. Goodnight was so successful his Texan ranch expanded to one million acres!

Why was John Illif important and how did he start ranching?

- John Illif bought a herd of cattle for \$500- a cheap price because the herd was exhausted after a long drive across the Plains and was too thin to sell for beef
- Illif saw an opportunity that would bring significant changes to the cattle industry
- Also during 1861, another gold rush, this time in the Colorado Rocky Mountains led to an increase in the number of prospectors living in the area
- This meant that there was a great demand for meat however there was no rail link to this area at this time
- Illif spotted the opportunity in the problem; if he could fatten his new herd up on the grass from the Plains, he would be able to sell beef for a good price to the mining towns without the need to move cattle on long drives
- Illif also discovered the cold winter on the Plains killed the ticks on the Texan Longhorns meaning they no longer would spread disease to other cattle
- He became a millionaire by using the Plains for a huge open range ranch from which he sold beef to mining towns, teams building the Union Pacific Railroad, and to the government for Plains Indian reservations
- In 1872, he won a contract to provide beef to a reservation of 7,000 Sioux Indians. As he raised his cattle on the Plains, this was the start of a new phase: ranching on the open range of the Plains, rather than driving them up from Texas. Others followed his example. This was going to cause conflicts with the homesteaders who were also moving onto the Plains

Who were the cattle barons?

- The 1870's saw a 'beef bonanza' in the West. Although the long drives from Texas continued to railheads in Kansas, the big growth was in ranching on the Plains
- Through the 1870's, the cattle industry was seen as a sure way to make money: costs were low (free grass, almost free land, cheap transportation by rail) while profits were high. As a result, investors poured money into the industry

- The best way to make a lot of money was to have very large ranches and enormous herds of cattle. The consequence was that a few men, backed by rich investors, dominated the cattle industry
- They were called cattle barons because of their wealth and influence. Some controlled local politics as well as almost all the land
- They defended their interests fiercely, especially against cattle rustling

What was the role of cowboys?

What was some of the cowboys equipment and what was it used for?

- HAT- can be used to signal orders/protect from sunburn/shade eyes
- BANDANA- acts as a mask to protect from dust, or tie down hat in certain weather conditions
- REVOLVER- carried 5 bullets in case they fire into their foot when trying to remove their gun quickly
- CHAPS- sturdy leather over trousers, long lasting hard wearing/ protecting
- BOOTS- on the back of the boots they wore spurs to jab the horse to go faster

What were some of cowboys jobs?

- Trampled
- Temperatures (hot/sunburnt)
- Danger of drowning (crossing rivers)
- Having to stay awake to do the night guarding
- Having to ride the 'drag' on the long drive (dust from the herd)
- Attacks from native American warriors (Indians)
- Attacks from rustlers (people who stole cattle)
- Freezing cold from the line camps

Why was there conflict between homesteaders and cowboys?

- Ranchers and homesteaders were in conflict with each other over land
- Ranches required a lot of land so there was enough space and grass for the livestock
- Ranches were usually on public land, though ranchers believed they owned the land their cattle roamed on. Conflict began when homesteaders began to file claims on rancher's 'land'
- Ranchers and homesteaders were in conflict with each other over land. Ranches required a lot of land so there was enough space and grass for the livestock
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- Ranchers deployed lots of tactics to make it difficult for homesteaders to file claims on their ranches. For example, they would file their own claims on the most attractive parts of the land (usually near waterholes) so that homesteaders would not want the land surrounding it. If they could afford it, ranchers would buy land from railroad companies or take homesteaders to court
- Ranchers usually won court cases as homesteaders rarely had enough money to pay a lawyer. Sometimes ranchers would accuse homesteaders of cattle rustling (stealing cows) as this was punished harshly
- Finally, some ranchers were violent towards homesteaders. The most famous conflict between ranchers and homesteaders was the Johnson County War

2.3 Changes in the way of life of the Plains Indians

What was the impact of railroads on Plains Indians?

- The Fort Laramie Treaty (1851) stipulated that Plains Indians had to allow railroad construction teams on their land. This had a huge impact on the Plains Indians way of life. The land grants that the railroad companies were given took away land from the Plains Indians
- It also greatly disrupted buffalo hunting, as fences around new white settler's lands and the railroad blocked the buffalo migrations. Furthermore, railroad workers often killed buffalo for meat or leather, or hunted them for sport
- Some tribes who lived near the railroad signed treaties that forced them to move to reservations. For example, the Pawnee, Omaha, Santee Sioux and Winnebago tribes all moved to reservations as a result of the construction of the railroad

What was the impact of the cattle industry on Plains Indians?

- Cattle ranching was problematic for the Plains Indians as cattle and buffalo competed for grass to eat. As the amount of cattle on the Great Plains rose, the amount of buffalo declined because there was not enough space or grass for both to survive. In 1860, Nebraska had just 37,197 cattle. This had risen to 1,113,241 by 1880
- Sometimes Plains Indians attacked cowboys who were on their land. In response, the US army was ordered to protect cowboys which meant Plains Indians were brought into conflict with the army

What was the impact of gold prospecting on Plains Indians?

Gold prospecting greatly affected the Plains Indians way of life. The following list describes some of the consequences of gold prospecting for the Plains Indians:

- Gold miners murdered Plains Indians or forced them to leave if they believed their as gold to be found on their land
- New towns that developed due to gold prospecting brought an alien culture to the Plains Indians' land. For example, there were churches, schools and shops
- The gold prospectors brought diseases from all around the world with them. This killed many Plains Indian's, as they were new diseases that they did not have immunity to
- The influx of miners either killed buffalo for meat and sport, or drove them away by taking up lots of space
- It led to direct conflict between Plains Indians and the US government as gold prospectors trespassed Indian land. For an example see Red Cloud's War

How did US government policy towards Plains Indians change/continue?

They continued their policy of moving Plains Indians on reservations as more white Americans moved onto the Plains.

Why did Plains Indians move to reservations?

- Because their council felt there was no other way for the tribe to survive due to the reduction in their land
- White expansion and dwindling food supplies forced them to make this decision

- The US government would make promises to chiefs that the tribes would be well cared for on the reservation with regular supplies of food and the opportunity to continue hunting on hunting grounds
- The US army used force to make them move onto reservations or return them if they left

What was the impact of reservations?

- The reservations showed no understanding of Plains Indians cultural values – they were often a long way from their sacred places and sometimes traditional enemies were placed on the same reservation
- Challenges of farming on the Plains were even worse for Plains Indians because they had poor farming land and some tribes didn't know how to farm
- The management of the reservations was the responsibility of the Indian Bureau of Affairs who were often corrupt and cheated tribes to make themselves wealthy
- White settlers were angry at the size of some of the reservations and complained that Plains Indians were being treated better than they were – the government used any excuse to reduce the size of reservations, breaking treaties by doing so and making it harder for the tribes to survive

What was President Grant's 'Peace Policy' of 1868?

- President Grant realised that government policy towards Plains Indians was not working. There had been lots of conflict between Plains Indians and the US government throughout the 1860's and Indians were struggling to survive on the reservations. In response, President Grant created the Peace Policy of 1868
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- The Peace Policy wanted to continue the strategy of placing Plains Indians into reservations to try and encourage them to become members of white American society. To support this, Grant made the army protect Indians in reservations from white attacks more effectively, and gave them the powers to attack any Indians who refused to stay in their reservation. Grant also replaced any corrupt Indian agents (government officials in charge of running the reservations) with Christian men. He believed that Christian clergymen would be more trustworthy and less likely to take advantage of the Plains Indians

What was the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864?

- The Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes came into conflict with the US government in 1864. This was sparked by the discovery of gold in the Colorado Territory in 1858. It caused lots of prospectors to trespass Cheyenne and Arapaho land. The prospectors demanded the government do something about the hostile Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes to make their journey safer
- In 1861 a new treaty was signed called the Treaty of Fort Wise. It stipulated that the Cheyenne and Arapaho would move to a reservation in east Colorado. However, some of the Cheyenne and Arapaho remained on their old lands. Conflict between the remaining Indians and the gold prospectors continued for three years.
- To end this conflict, a chief called Black Kettle attempted to reach an agreement with the US government. He temporarily set up camp at Sand Creek. On the 29 November 1864, the Territory's governor, John Evans, sent in a force of 1,000 men to 'kill and destroy' hostile Plains Indians. A Civil War hero called Colonel Chivington led them. They murdered over 150 men, women, children and babies. They raped the women and mutilated the bodies of those they had killed. Body parts of the victims were later displayed in local saloons as trophies.

During this massacre, Black Kettle had put up white and American flags to show that they had surrendered

- The US government was preoccupied with the civil war and decided they needed to pacify the tribes after the massacre. They promised to move them to a large reservation and pay compensation to the survivors. However, once the war was over the US ignored the deal. The Cheyenne and Arapaho were forced to move to a tiny reservation and no compensation was paid to the survivors. News spread to neighbouring tribes about the events of Sand Creek Massacre, destroying any remaining trust the Plains Indians had towards the US government

What Red Cloud's War (1866 – 68)?

- Red Cloud was a respected war leader of the Lakota Sioux Tribe. Gold was discovered in Montana in 1862. To reach Montana, gold prospectors began to use a shortcut called the Bozeman Trail. This crossed through important Lakota Sioux hunting grounds, which meant thousands of gold prospectors were trespassing Indian land. The Lakota Sioux responded by attacking them
- In 1866, the US government attempted to create a new treaty with the Lakota Sioux. The US wanted to persuade the Lakota Sioux to allow prospectors to travel safely through the Bozeman Trail. Yet, before talks had even begun, Red Cloud discovered that the US government had begun building forts along the Bozeman Trail. He realised the government were going to allow prospectors to travel across the Bozeman Trail whether the Lakota Sioux agreed to it or not. Red Cloud called off negotiations with the government and chose to fight instead
- On the 21st of December 1866, the Lakota Sioux attacked a fort along the Bozeman trail. Captain Fetterman was given the job of defending it. The Lakota Sioux had created a tactic where they would send a few men to be spotted by US soldiers, who would then lead them into an ambush. When Fetterman spotted a couple of Lakota Sioux, he ordered his men to pursue them. Fetterman's 80 men were led into a trap. Over 1,000 Lakota Sioux warriors surrounded them. All of Fetterman's men were murdered, stripped, scalped and mutilated. This event became known as Fetterman's trap
- This was the US army's worst defeat ever against the Plains Indians. It convinced the government that they needed to try persuade the Lakota Sioux to allow prospectors to travel through the Bozeman Trail, rather than to continue fighting them. It resulted in the second Fort Laramie Treaty

What was the Second Fort Laramie Treaty?

- The Second Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 was a direct consequence of Red Cloud's War and Fetterman's Trap
- The US government realised they could not defeat the Dakota Sioux without sending in huge numbers of men. Additionally, another trail to the gold-mining areas of Montana had been discovered
- The government therefore agreed to close the Bozeman Trail and the forts along it. In return, Red Cloud agreed to move his people to a reservation in Dakota that became known as the Great Sioux Reservation. No whites were allowed to enter this land
- Not all Sioux agreed with this treaty and some left Red Cloud to join more militant bands led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse
- However, the Second Fort Laramie Treaty marked the end of fighting for Red Cloud and he spent the rest of his life living in peace

Topic 3: Conflict and compromise

C1876 – c1895

3.1 Changes in farming, the cattle industry and settlement

The Exoduster movement (1879)

What was the Exoduster movement?

- In 1865 the American Civil War ended. It had been won by the anti-slavery north
- This meant that over four million African-Americans were freed from slavery in 1865. However, many of the southern states could not accept this and they continued to try and restrict black Americans freedom. For example, the KKK terrorised black Americans throughout the southern states and used intimidation to prevent black Americans from voting
- The southern states also forced many black Americans into sharecropping. Sharecropping is when a landlord gives a tenant some land in return for a proportion of the crops they grow. Although black sharecroppers were freemen
- This system kept black farmers working on white plantations for free
- Life for black Americans therefore remained difficult in the southern states and some black Americans decided to move west to file homestead claims

- Many began to move to Kansas, which had always been a free state. Benjamin Singleton, a former slave, pioneered this move by advertising Kansas to black Americans still living in the south
- In 1879, a rumour spread that the US government was giving away free land for ex-slaves in Kansas
- This further encouraged thousands of black Americans to move to Kansas. By the end of the year, over 40,000 had begun the journey to Kansas. This became known as the Exoduster movement as it was an exodus to the dusty West

What were the impacts of the Exoduster movement?

- **Impacts for the West:**
 - By 1880, there were 43,107 black Americans in Kansas, settling 81 km squared of land. Settlements, like Nicodemus in Kansas, were founded by black Americans
- **Impacts for black American settlers:**
 - as other settlers and ranchers had already taken all the best land in Kansas so the land that was left to farm with was very difficult to work with
 - Often these settlers soon desperately needed help to survive
 - Also many had come to Kansas believing that the land would be free and were not able to afford the administration fee to take up their claims
 - The migration had also been unplanned and charities struggled to organise help for migrants in trouble
- **Response from Kansas government:**
 - Many Exodusters had travelled through areas affected by yellow fever and so many were dangerously ill. The Kansas governor set up an association to help the migrants which organised colonies for them to live in and a small amount of temporary state funding to help them get started
- **Responses from white Americans:**
 - There was a huge opposition to the Exodusters in the southern states, but most white Americans in Kansas also thought the Exodusters should not be helped and should be returned to the South
 - White settlers in Kansas thought it was wrong that the state government thought it was wrong that the state government should help the Exodusters and not them
- **End of the movement:**
 - The reality of the situation in Kansas filtered back to the Southern states and, by the 1880s, the exodus turned into a much smaller stream of migrants. These tended to have saved money and put together the resources necessary for settling in the West
 - Exoduster migrants typically remained poorer than the white migrants to Kansas through the 1880s and 1890s, though they were better off than they had been in the South
 - However, the difficulties faced by some black settlers in Kansas meant that there was a second (smaller) wave of migration out of Kansas as former Exodusters went elsewhere in the USA, especially to Nebraska and, after 1889, to Oklahoma

What was the Oklahoma Land Rush (1893)?

- Indian Territory was the area of land that had been reserved specifically for the Indians
- Different tribes owned different sections
- In the middle of the Indian Territory there was a section that no tribe officially owned
- White settlers had been attempting to settle here since the beginning of the 1880's as it had very fertile farmland. However, they were usually stopped by the US army which shows that the government were capable of protecting Indian land if they wished
- In 1889 the US government decided to allow white settlers onto this middle-section of land to file homestead claims
- At noon on the 22 April 1889, white settlers gathered around the boundary waiting for a signal to declare the territory was open
- When a gun sounded, thousands rushed across the border
- This event became known as the first Oklahoma land rush. There were a total of seven land rushes in 1889 and, by the end of the year, Oklahoma had a population of 60,000
- The land rush is significant as it is another example of the US government giving away Indian land because of pressure from white settlers

3.2 Conflict and tension

Who was Billy the Kid?

What happened with Wyatt Earp and OK Corral?

- In the cow town of Tombstone in Arizona, cowboys often drank and gambled. The northern businessmen did not agree with this behaviour, as they wanted Arizona to be a peaceful place where people could do business
- These businessmen therefore wanted sheriffs and lawmen to police the town and control the cowboy's behaviour
- They elected Virgil Earp as sheriff and his two brothers, Wyatt and Morgan Earp, served as deputies
- Rivalry between the Earps and a group of ranchers and cowboys, led by the Clanton and McLaury families, grew
- This rivalry came to a head on the 26 October 1881 when Virgil Earp disarmed Clanton. Clanton was fined for carrying a gun, as the town had created a law banning weapons
- Clanton was angry, and he met with his family and the McLaurys. By 3pm a gunfight had broken out at the OK Corral between the Earps, and the Clanton and McLaury families. In just minutes, three men had been killed and two were injured
- A series of tit-for-tat killings continued and, in 1882, Morgan Earp was murdered. Wyatt Earp then shot two cowboys who he believed to be responsible for his brother's murder. Public opinion turned against the Earps, and they decided to leave town for their own safety
- The story of Wyatt Earp and the OK Corral is another example of the continuation of lawlessness in the American West

The Johnson County War

What happened with the Johnson County War (1892)?

- The Johnson County War was fought between cattle barons, and homesteaders and small ranchers. It demonstrates the continuation of rivalry between cattle barons and homesteaders and shows that, even in the 1890's, people were still taking the law into their own hands

- In Wyoming, cattle barons were appointed to key positions in government. They also set up their own association, the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA), to protect their interests. Many of the cattle barons suffered great losses in Great Die up of 1886-7
- In contrast, the small ranchers survived the winter with minimal losses and this upset the cattle barons. Rustling had been a problem in Wyoming for years but, now that the cattle barons were struggling to survive, they wanted to put a stop to it
- In 1889, the first killings took place. Small ranch owners, Jim Averill and Ella Watson, were living on land a cattle baron called Albert Bothwell wanted. Averill wrote a letter to the local newspaper accusing Bothwell of being a land-grabber.
- Bothwell then accused Ella of rustling a small herd of cows. Bothwell's men caught and hanged Averill and Watson, and took over their land and cattle. No one was prosecuted for these murders
- In retaliation, homesteaders and small ranchers created their own association and decided to hold their own round-up of cattle before the WSGA's. This meant they could claim all of the new-born cattle for themselves
- The WSGA were furious and planned a full-scale invasion of Johnson County. They created a list of 70 people who they intended to kill
- The WSGA also hired and paid gunmen. This was done in full knowledge of Wyoming's governor
- However, the WSGA's plan failed. Small rancher Nate Champion heroically held them up all day. By the time he had been killed, the alarm had been raised in a nearby town and the local people were ready to fight. The US Cavalry arrived and fought off the WSAG. The war had ended

Why was the Johnson County War significant?

- Vigilante justice had been central to Frontier solution to problems of law and order throughout the 19th century. What is more surprising is not that rich cattlemen decided it was a good idea to kill 70 men, but that so many people thought it was wrong
- There were fewer tensions when both farms and ranches fenced off their land, and when ranches were based on the same property rights that homesteads were. This could not happen under the open range system, but after the winter of 1886 – 87, most cattlemen moved to small ranches with fenced in winter pastures

Conflict with the Plains Indians

What happened at the Battle of Little Big Horn?

- In 1874, the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad was approaching Sioux Indian hunting grounds in Dakota
- George Custer, a US army commander, was ordered to protect the construction workers from Plains Indian attacks. However, Custer began to mine for gold in the Black Hills. This led of thousands of gold prospectors travelling to the Black Hills and settling on Dakota Sioux Land
- This directly broke the terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty and was especially insulting as the Black Hills were sacred to the Sioux
- The US government then offered to buy the Black Hills from the Sioux for \$6 million. The Sioux rejected this offer and continued to attack prospectors trespassing their land
- The US government then used this as an excuse to accuse the Sioux tribe of breaching the Fort Laramie Treaty
- Relations between the US government and the Sioux broke down
- Thousands of Sioux left their reservation to join the militant Sioux leaders Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse
- The US government ordered them to return to their reservations and, in December 1875, were given 60 days to do so or they would be attacked. However, deep snow made it impossible for the Sioux to return to their reservations

- By the spring of 1876, over 7,000 Sioux were settled outside of their reservation near the valley of Little Bighorn
- The US army planned to force the Sioux back into their reservations by launching an attack on them. However, Custer ignored orders to wait for reinforcements and recklessly led 200 men into the Little Bighorn Valley where the Sioux were gathered. Crazy Horse attacked Custer's men, killing all 200 of them
- It was a momentous victory of the Sioux Indians and an embarrassing defeat for Custer and the US government

What were the impact of the battle?

- It changed public perceptions of Plains Indians from weak savages to a real threat. If Plains Indians could beat the US Army, then what did that mean for the 'Manifest Destiny' of white America? Plains Indians would have to assimilate or die
- There was enormous pressure on the US government to crush the Plains Indians resistance. Government policy now focused on achieving this, with catastrophic impacts on plains Indians and their way of life including:
 - Plains Indians must be kept on their reservations
 - Previous treaties could be ignored
 - Military control of Plains Indians must be maintained
- In the Spring of 1877, Crazy Horse surrendered to the US Army in Nebraska. He was killed in the autumn while under arrest at Fort Robinson. All effective resistance to the loss of their land by the Plains Indians was over

Wounded Knee Massacre (1890)

What happened?

- By the end of the 1880's the atmosphere amongst the Indians on the reservations was one of desperation and despair
- The Sioux's food ration had been cut and their crops had failed. In 1889, a Paiute Indian called Wovoka had a vision. He claimed that if Indians danced a sacred dance, known as the ghost dance, the whites would disappear and the Indians would once again own the Great Plains
- The Ghost Dance quickly spread throughout the reservations and this worried the Indian agents
- They tried to ban the dance, but the Indians refused to stop. The police attempted to arrest Sitting Bull, believing he was trying to start a rebellion, and shot him dead. Sitting Bull's followers fled to join the band of Big Foot, another leading chief
- The US army caught up with Big Foot and his followers and forced them to go to Wounded Knee Creek where they could be kept under guard. On the 29th of December 1890, the US 7th Cavalry were sent in to disarm the Sioux
- One Sioux resisted, and others began to dance. The 7th Cavalry opened fire. Within just ten minutes 146 Indians and 25 US soldiers were dead, including 7 Indian babies
- This was the last conflict between the US army and the Sioux.

What was the reaction like to the Wounded Knee Massacre?

American public opinion generally approved of the massacre. They had been worried about the Ghost Dance and felt that the massacre was justified as revenge for the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Topic 3.3

The destruction of the Plains Indian way of life

1 The hunting and extermination of the buffalo

- By 1883 the vast herds of buffalo (over 25 million) had gone

Economic reasons for the extermination

- After 1871 a process was discovered for cheaply turning buffalo hide into the right sort of leather for the machine belts powering USA industry. People rushed to kill as many buffalo as they could.
- Railroads brought hunters to the plains and took hides back to the cities.
- Once the hide was removed the rest of the buffalo was just left to rot.

Extermination south and north

- Hunting of the southern herd peaked 1872-74, when hunters killed around 4.5 million animals, compared to 1 million killed by Indians.
- The northern herd was protected by the Great Sioux reservation until 1876. After this the government began to break up Sioux land and the railroad reached it leading to 5,000 buffalo hunters arriving.
- By 1883 the northern herd had gone

Extermination and government policy

- Indians onto reservations. Exterminating buffalo fitted in well with the government's policy of moving
- Plains Indians resisted going onto reservations as long as there were buffalo to hunt
- Treaties gave Plains Indians the right to hunt buffalo outside of their reservations. But these clauses lasted only as long as there was buffalo to hunt.
- Without their main food Plains Indians needed to learn how to farm and so to assimilate
- Plains Indians resisted the growth of the railroads because it needed buffalo to be cleared. Areas without buffalo were easier for railroad building

- Extinction of the buffalo also opened up the Plains for the cattle industry.

Impact on the Plains Indians

- The loss of the buffalo shattered the Plains Indians way of life.
- Some Indians started to raise cattle and others began farming crops, but cattle herds were affected by disease and crops failed year after year.
- Reservation Indians became dependent on the government for handouts of food.
- The government reduced this to punish the Plains Indians who took part in resistance.
- This lowered their resistance to illness and many died.

Plains Indians life on the Reservations

- The US government forced Plains Indians onto smaller reservations and took away their independence.
- Reservations were to be phased out and Plains Indians were to assimilate into the American way of life.

Shrinking Reservations

- According to the Fort Laramie Treaty 3 quarters of adult male Indians needed to agree to changes in a Treaty.
- Following the Dawes Act in 1887 further discussions took place and the Indians were pressured into accepting further reductions in reservation size
- 6 small reservations were created and the surplus land sold off.

Taking power away from Tribal Chiefs

- In the early 1880s the US government set up councils among the tribes. These were to take over the chiefs powers.
- The US negotiators were easily able to influence council members through threats and bribes.
- In 1883 special courts took over the chiefs' powers to judge and punish Indians.
- In 1885 these courts were abolished in favour of US federal law courts. This was important as the Indians had now lost the ability to govern themselves.

Government Agents

- They used bribes of increased food rations or medical supplies in return for good behaviour amongst the Indians.
- A number of Indians joined the Indian Agency Police. They were given food, clothing and shelter and were responsible for keeping order amongst the Indians.

Education and Religion

- Indian boys and girls were sent to schools off the reservation. If parents refused their food ration was cut until they agreed.

- In school the children lived and learned under military style conditions. They were taught to have no respect for their traditional way of life, were raised as Christians and were punished if they spoke their own language.

Living Conditions

- A nomadic hunting existence was no longer permitted and therefore the Indians no longer had the ability to clothe and feed themselves.
- Farming was not part of their traditional way of life, they did not have the skills to farm. The reservations were mostly on poor land and so crops failed.
- Disease, alcoholism and depression spread throughout the reservations.

Changing government attitudes to the Plains Indians

- The government had chosen a policy of reservations to keep the Indians away from white settlers. These reservations had been protected by USA law through treaties.
- By the late 1880s much had changed. The Indian way of life had been destroyed. The power of the chiefs had been removed and Indian beliefs had been suppressed.
- Most Indians seemed to sink into poverty and sickness, surviving on government handouts
- Many white settlers saw this as unfair – why did Indians still have land they were not using profitably?
- The government decided the reservation system was the problem. The Indians still lived as part of a tribe who shared work and food between them, instead of competing against each other like white people did?

The Dawes Act 1887

- Each Plains Indian family was allotted a 160 acre share of reservation land. Single Plains Indians were given 80 acres and orphans under 18 got 40.
- Indians who took up this offer left the reservation and became American citizens.
- All reservation land leftover could be sold to whites. This was often bought by railroad companies and speculators.
- The result of this was that by 1890 Plains Indians had lost half the lands they still had.
- The Indians who took up the offer often found it impossible to farm the land as conditions were too tough. Most sold their land to whites and ended up landless.
- As a result, life became even harder and conditions even worse than before.

Closure of the Indian Frontier

- In 1890 the US declared the frontier was closed (ceased to exist)
- There were enough settlers for new states to be established in the West.
- Railroads covered the West and cities had grown up.