

## Chapter 16

### Transformation of the Trans-Mississippi West

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### Great Plains



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- The development of the trans-Mississippi West depended heavily upon the actions of the federal government in three ways:
  - Subjugate the Native Americans
  - Subsidize the Transcontinental Railroad
  - Pass the Homestead Act of 1862
- Standing in the way of the federal government were Native Plains Indians hostile to losing their lands, culture, and way of life.

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## Northern Plains

- From the Dakotas and Montana to Nebraska
- Home to the Lakota Sioux, Flatheads, Arapahos, Crows, Blackfeet, northern Cheyenne, Hidatsas, and Mandans
- Primarily nomadic and semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers
- Represents the tribes most hostile against American development of the West

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## Central Plains

- Located in the Indian Territory (modern-day Oklahoma)
- Home to the Five Civilized Tribes (Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole) who had been driven from their homes in their traditional tribal lands in the Southeast by white settlement.
- Settled, agricultural life
- Put up very little fight against the development of the West

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## Southern Plains

- From western Kansas, Colorado, eastern New Mexico, and Texas
- Home to the Comanches, Kiowas, southern Cheyenne and Arapahos, and Apaches
- Nomadic tribes
- Hostile against development of the West but harsh actions by the U.S. Army early in the conflict would lessen their fight.

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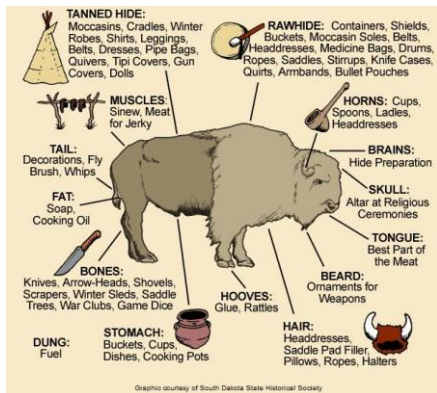
## Common Characteristics

- Life revolved around extended family ties and tribal cooperation
- Children raised without physical punishment
- Family clans joined together to hunt, farm, and make tribal decisions by consensus.

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## American Bison

- Estimated peak population of 30 million
- Settlers moving into the West threatened the buffalo population through mining and agriculture
- In the 1860's settlers began hunting the buffalo to supply eastern markets with carriage robes and industrial belting, and to feed railroad construction crews.
- Most damaging was the U.S. army's mass slaughter of herds to undermine Native American resistance
- By 1880, the population of the American bison was just a few thousand.

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## Indian Wars



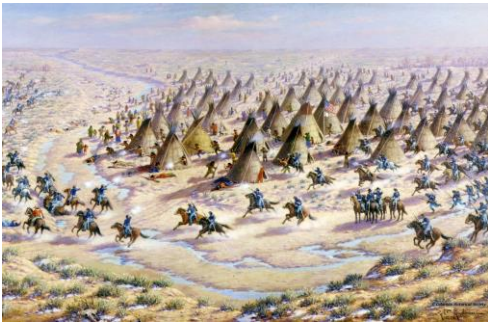
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## Indian Wars

- In 1860, the federal government established eight western reservations
- Some tribes resettled on the reservations peacefully, others would engage in a thirty year war to not only stay off the reservations but to protect their culture and way of life.
- From 1860 to 1890, the Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowas, and Comanches of the Great Plains, the Nez Perces and Bannocks of the northern Rockies, and the Apache of the southwest battled with the U.S. army over the West.

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## Sand Creek Massacre



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## “Peace Policy”

- Congress sent a peace commission to end fighting and establish two large Indian reserves
- Federal government hoped the Native Americans would take up farming and convert to Christianity
- Behind the offer of peace was a threat of force
- Led to two significant treaties:
  - Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1867
  - Fort Laramie Treaty

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## Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1867



- Of the two treaties, the Medicine Lodge Treaty was the most successful from the federal government's perspective
- It took the Indian Territory, which belonged to the Five Civilized Tribes, and subdivided it into smaller sections.
- Representatives of the Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Arapahos signed the treaty and many of their tribe accepted reservation life

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## Fort Laramie Treaty



- In 1868 representatives of several scattered bands of Sioux signed the Fort Laramie Treaty, which required that they live on the Great Sioux Reserve
- Many of the Native Americans impacted by the treaty refused to abide by it or held a different interpretation of the treaty's wording, especially the requirement that they never leave the reservation
- In August of 1868, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Sioux warriors dissatisfied with the treaty raided settlements and killed settlers in Kansas and Colorado

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## Washita River Battle



THE SEVENTH U.S. CAVALRY CHARGING INTO BLACK KETTLE VILLAGE AT DAYLIGHT, November 27, 1890. (San Francisco)

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## Chief Sitting Bull

- Sitting Bull was a chief, religious leader, and chief warrior of the Lakota Sioux.
- Following the death of Black Kettle, Sitting Bull took the lead of organizing the fight against the development of the West.
- He led both the Lakota Sioux and other tribes in their fight against the U.S. Army.



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## Lt. Col. George A. Custer



- Custer was a Civil War veteran selected to fight against the Plains Indians in the West.
- His primary objectives were to peacefully or forcefully push Native Americans onto reservations, secure lands and resources for the United States, and protect white settlers from attacks.
- Acquired near celebrity status with Americans for his actions against the Plains Indians

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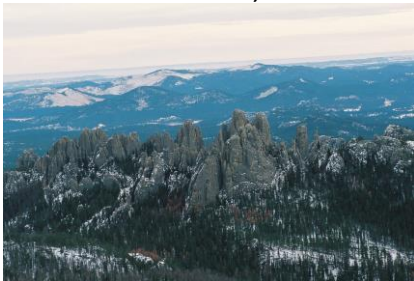
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## Black Hills, SD



The Black Hills were sacred lands within the Great Sioux Reserve. The Fort Laramie Treaty had guaranteed that they would always belong to the Sioux. However, once gold was discovered in the Black Hills the federal government sought to take the area from Sioux.

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## Battle of Little Bighorn

- In 1874, Gen. William T. Sherman sent a force under the leadership of Col. Custer to the Black Hills to purchase them from the Lakota Sioux
- When the Sioux's asking price was deemed to high, negotiations broke down and Custer sought to drive the Sioux out by force
- In June 1876, Custer led 600 troops to the Little Bighorn River. Him and his men were annihilated by Sitting Bull's larger force

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## After the Battle

- Despite Sitting Bull's victory over Custer, the Battle of Little Bighorn failed to turn the war in the Plains Indians' favor.
- Following Little Bighorn the U.S. Army won several skirmishes which diminished Sitting Bull's army.
- The Lakota Sioux fled to Canada but eventually were forced to surrender due to starvation and disease.
- Sitting Bull and most of the Sioux and its allies moved onto the reservations.

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## Protecting Native Americans

- American reformers in the east were shocked at the brutality the federal government inflicted upon the Native Americans. They were especially appalled at the way in which the government consistently broke its treaties with Native Americans
- These reformers would go on to advocate for change in American policies with Native Americans, unfortunately many of those changes involved programs meant to "civilize" Native Americans

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## Indian Boarding Schools



- Helen Hunt Jackson and other reformers advocated for the creation of Indian boarding schools
- The purpose of these schools was not to change the way in which the federal government and U.S. army interacted with Native Americans, but instead teach Native Americans how to fit into "white American society".
- In these institutions, Native American children were not permitted to speak their tribal languages or practice their tribal religions. They also did not learn about the history or customs of their own people
- Many reformers believed that the best way to deal with Native Americans would be to break up the reservations, end recognition of tribal governments, and gradually give them the rights of American citizenship

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## Indian Boarding Schools

- By 1880 there were 60 on-reservation boarding schools that housed more than 6200 Native American children.
- These saw limited success according to reformers because parents and tribes still had access and influence over their children.
- Off-reservation boarding schools were established throughout the West where tens of thousands of children were forcibly removed from their families.

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## Off-Reservation Schools



Off-reservation schools took a much harsher approach to assimilating Native American children.

Children could only speak, write, and learn in the English language. History celebrated European conquerors and presented it as a wholly positive event for Native Americans.

Besides being forced to dress and look as much like white Americans as possible, native children were also required to adopt Anglican names.

Half of their education was on how to be productive workers in industry.

Punishments were severe and included beatings, solitude, and restrictions on food.

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## Dawes Severalty Act

- There were also attempts to “civilize” the adult Native Americans too. This was largely done through legislation designed to entice Native Americans to adopt a settled life while also destroying devotion to one’s tribe.
- Distributed 160 farming acres or 320 grazing acres to the head of each Native American family
- Remaining lands sold to speculators/settlers
- Property held by the government for 25 years, at which time family head receives deed and U.S. citizenship

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## Failures of the Dawes Severalty Act

- The law emphasized treating the Native Americans as individuals, therefore negating and bypassing tribal governments and the Native American custom of communal ownership of land
- Most of the best lands went to land speculators, leaving the Native Americans with land unsuitable for agriculture
- Almost all reservations had tough restrictions on hunting, which combined with poor land resulted in the Native Americans unable to provide for themselves or even survive without assistance

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## Ghost Dance Movement



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## Reservation Life

- Living on reservations was very difficult for Native Americans, especially those used to hunting and living nomadically.
- Rates of depression, suicide, and alcoholism skyrocketed. It was amidst these issues that a religious movement emerged to inspire the Plains Indians, the Ghost Dance Movement.
- The Ghost Dance, if performed correctly and for a long enough time, would see the Native Americans' ancestors rise from the dead and join the living to defeat the U.S. Army and drive whites from their lands.

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## Death of Sitting Bull

- Because of his prominence as a tribal and religious leader, on the Great Sioux Reserve, the Ghost Dance centered upon Sitting Bull's remote cabin.
- Concerned that movement would reignite the Sioux's desire to fight, reservation officials tried to arrest Sitting Bull.
- This attempt would lead to the death of Sitting Bull, leading to a last ditch attempt by the Sioux to win the war.

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## Wounded Knee Massacre

- Two weeks after the death of Chief Sitting Bull, the U.S. Seventh Cavalry was rounding up 340 Sioux warriors at Wounded Knee when a shot was fired.
- The soldiers responded with cannon fire, killing more than 300 Sioux within a matter of minutes
- Wounded Knee signifies the end of Native American resistance in the West and an end to the Indian Wars



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## Transcontinental Railroad



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## Pacific Railroad Act

- Passed in 1862, the act authorized the construction of a new transcontinental link that would connect the eastern United States with the West Coast.
- The project was completed on May 10, 1869 when the two lines met at Promontory Point, Utah.

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## Settlement of the West

Railroads through the West will:

1. Speed up subjugation of the Native Americans
2. Turn railroad companies into the real estate agents of the West
3. Ensure diversity in settlement populations
4. Encourage settlers to invest in cash crop agriculture

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## 1862 Homestead Act

- Granted 160 acres to anyone that could pay the \$10 registration fee and work the land for five years
- Best lands went to speculators. Settlers got stuck with the worst lands for farming
- To offset this, follow-up legislation increased acreage to farmers for free or for a nominal cost.

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## Life for the Settlers



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- Worked on average 68 hours/week...in isolation.
- Scarcity of timber meant most lived in sod huts
- Faced hot summers, freezing winters, and frequent storms, as well as Native American attacks
- Nearly 50% of all settlers will go back home
- Those that stuck it out saw improvements to their life within 10 years

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## Mormons



- Mormon leader Brigham Young moved the Mormon faith to modern-day state of Utah in 1847.
- The goal was to establish an independent Mormon nation, which would be named Deseret.
- Twenty years of recruitment followed until the Mormons numbered over 100,000.
- The Mormon Church in Utah found themselves at odds with the U.S. government due to their deep involvement in politics, communal business practices, and the practice of polygamy.
- Mormons developed their own railroad system, established a mercantile system to control business, and established a political party to mobilize Mormon voters.

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## Anti-Mormon Legislation

- **Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act** – signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1862, it banned polygamy and limited non-profit ownership to \$50,000.
- **U.S. vs Reynolds** – Supreme Court declares plural marriages unlawful and stated freedom of religion did not protect religious practice
- **Edmunds-Tucker Act** – dissolved church's assets to \$50,000, abolished women's right to vote in Utah, and placed all church property and funds in control of the courts
- In 1890, the Mormon Church officially ended polygamy, dissolved the People's Party, and supported Utah's application for statehood.
- In return confiscated church property was returned, women were once again allowed to vote in Utah, and jailed polygamists were pardoned.

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## Western Industry

- Mining
- Ranching
- Farming

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## Mining Boom

- Pros: stimulated the U.S. economy, drew foreign investors, and placed the U.S. into the world economy
- Cons: environmental damage, especially to rivers through the use of cyanide and mercury to wash ore

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## Ranching Boom

- Pros: offered jobs to African American and Mexican men at a time when they struggled to find work elsewhere
- Cons: “cowboys” received very little of the enormous profits earned from cattle drives and were constantly at risk from cattle thieves and bandits

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## Wheat Boom

- Pro: wheat becomes America’s first agribusiness, which employed thousands of people
- Cons: overproduction, high investment costs, and susceptible to a fickle international grain market, all of which led to bankruptcy issues

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## Oklahoma Land Rush

- To spur settlement of the West, the United States began the Oklahoma Land Rush in 1889
- This program stripped 2 million acres from the Indian Territory and opened it to settlement
- Combined with the Dawes Severalty Act, the Indian Territory was broken up into smaller allotments and opened to non-Indian settlement
- In 1898, the Curtis Act officially dissolved the Indian Territory and abolished its tribal governments

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