

Study Guide



Chapter 13, Section 1

For use with textbook pages 414–419

MINERS AND RANCHERS

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

- placer mining** the process of removing mineral ore by hand (page 415)
- quartz mining** the process of removing ore by digging deep beneath the surface (page 415)
- Henry Comstock** prospector who found huge silver strike in Nevada (page 415)
- vigilance committee** self-appointed volunteers who tracked down and punished wrongdoers (page 415)
- open range** vast areas of grassland owned by the federal government (page 416)
- long drive** cattle run in which herds were moved great distances to a rail line, where they were shipped to market (page 417)
- Chisholm Trail** a major trail on the long drive (page 417)
- maverick** stray calf with no identifying symbols (page 418)
- barbed wire** wire used to fence off the range (page 419)

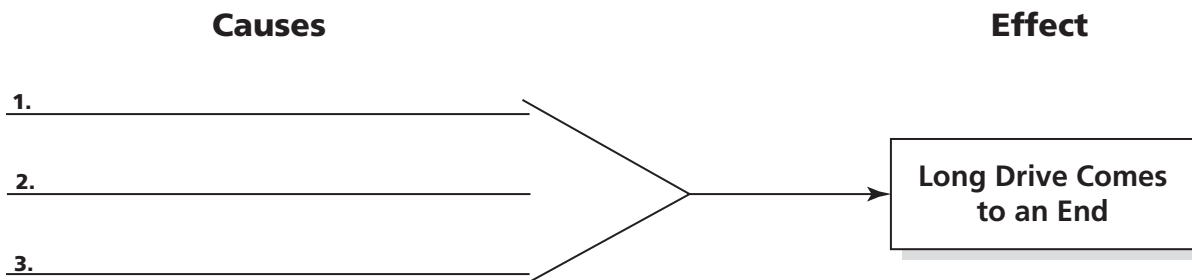
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

What images come to mind when you hear the word *cowboys*? What kind of life do you think they had? What kind of work did they do? Where do most of your ideas about cowboys come from?

In this section, you will learn about the start of the mining industry in the West. You will also learn how ranchers helped to settle large areas of the West.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the cause-and-effect diagram below to help you take notes. The long drive helped to develop the cattle industry on the Great Plains, but it did not last long. List the reasons why the long drive came to an end in the diagram.



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Chapter 13, Section 1 (continued)

READ TO LEARN

- **Growth of the Mining Industry** (page 414)

The discovery of minerals in the West led to a flood of people hoping to strike it rich. At first, the prospectors would try to remove the mineral ore by hand. This process was called **placer mining**. After these deposits diminished, corporations would move in to dig beneath the surface. This process was called **quartz mining**.

In 1859 a prospector named Henry Comstock staked a claim in Six-Mile Canyon, Nevada. There he found nearly pure silver ore. News of the strike brought huge numbers of miners to Virginia City, Nevada. The town soon became a boomtown with thousands of people, shops, newspapers, and a hotel. When the silver deposits ran out and the mines closed, the once booming towns became ghost towns.

During boom times, crime was a problem in the mining towns. Prospectors fought over claims, and thieves roamed the streets. There was little law enforcement. As a result, volunteers sometimes formed **vigilance committees** to find and punish wrongdoers.

Men were usually the first settlers in mining towns. However, the towns soon attracted women. Some owned property and were leaders of the community. Others worked as cooks. Some women worked at places called hurdy-gurdy houses, where they danced with men for the price of a drink.

Mining also led to the development of towns in Colorado, the Dakota Territory, and Montana. Although there was plenty of gold and silver in the mountains in Colorado, much of it was below the surface and difficult to get out. A big strike happened in the late 1870s in Leadville, where deep deposits of lead contained large amounts of silver. By 1879 thousands of people were pouring into Leadville, which became a well-known boomtown.

The gold and silver found in Colorado were worth more than one billion dollars. This led to the building of railroads through the Rocky Mountains. The railroad helped change Denver into the second largest city in the West.

Gold was discovered in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory in the 1870s. Copper was discovered in Montana in the 1880s. The discoveries led to a rush of settlers and the development of boomtowns. Although many individuals benefited, corporations made the greatest profits from mining. It became big business in the West.

4. Who made the greatest profits from mining in the West?

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• Ranching and Cattle Drives (page 416)

After the Civil War, many Americans headed west to build cattle ranches on the Great Plains. In the early 1800s, Americans believed that the Great Plains had too little water and tough prairie grasses for cattle from the East. However, Texas had a breed of cattle, the longhorn, that was adapted to living on the Great Plains. This breed had descended from a breed of Spanish cattle that had been brought to Mexico two hundred years earlier.

Mexicans had begun cattle ranching in New Mexico, California, and Texas before these places were part of the United States. Cattle ranching grew in part because of the **open range**—a vast area of grassland owned by the federal government. The open range made up a large part of the Great Plains. This provided land for ranchers to graze their herds free of charge. Mexican cowhands developed the tools and equipment used for rounding up and driving cattle.

Before the Civil War, there was little reason for ranchers to round up the cattle. Beef prices were low, and it was not practical to move the cattle to eastern markets. However, the Civil War and the building of railroads changed this situation. During the Civil War, eastern cattle were slaughtered to provide food for the armies. After the war, beef prices rose sharply. This made it worthwhile to round up the longhorns and move them east.

By the end of the Civil War, railroad lines reached to the Great Plains. They ended at Abilene and Dodge City in Kansas and in Sedalia, Missouri. Cattle ranchers realized that they could make a profit if they rounded up and drove their cattle north to the railroad. There they could be sold for profit and shipped east. In 1866 ranchers rounded up thousands of longhorns and drove them to Sedalia, Missouri. This first **long drive** was a success. The cattle sold for 10 times the price they could have gotten in Texas. Several long drive trails soon opened. The **Chisholm Trail**, the route to Abilene, Kansas, became the major trail north. Cowhands drove nearly 1.5 million head of cattle up that trail. Other trails also connected Texas to towns further north.

The long drive started in the spring when cowhands collected cattle from the open range. These herds included cattle from many different owners. The brands on the cattle showed to whom they belonged. Life on the trails was dangerous. Those cowhands who survived collected their pay in the towns at the end of the trail.

Some of the cattle that were driven north went straight to slaughterhouses. Many were sold to ranchers who were building up their herds in Wyoming, Montana, and other territories. When farmers settled in this area and when sheepherders moved their sheep onto the open range, they blocked the cattle trails and caused “range wars” among these groups. Eventually the range was fenced off with **barbed wire**. The fencing of the open range led to the end of the long cattle drives.

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The long drive ended for other reasons as well. Investors had put a great deal of money in the cattle business. This led to an oversupply of animals on the market, causing prices to drop sharply in the mid-1880s. Then in the winter of 1886–1887, blizzards covered the Great Plains. The snow was so deep the cattle could not get to the grass. Also, a cold spell set in. The cattle industry was able to survive these events, but the open range ended, and herds were raised on fenced-in ranches.

5. How did the Civil War contribute to the long drive?

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Chapter 13, Section 2

For use with textbook pages 420–423

FARMING THE PLAINS

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

Great Plains the region that extends westward to the Rocky Mountains from around the 100th meridian (page 420)

Stephen Long the major who explored the region of the Great Plains and concluded that it was a desert, unfit for farming (page 421)

Homestead Act a law that helped support settlement in the Great Plains (page 421)

homestead a tract of public land available for settlement (page 421)

dry farming a method of farming in which seeds were planted deep in the ground where there was enough moisture to grow (page 422)

sodbuster those who plowed the soil on the Great Plains (page 422)

Wheat Belt the wheat-growing region that started at the eastern edge of the Great Plains and included much of the Dakotas and the western parts of Nebraska and Kansas (page 422)

bonanza farm large, profitable wheat farms (page 422)

DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Have you read books by Laura Ingalls Wilder? What kinds of situations did people living and working on the prairies of the United States face in the 1800s?

The last section described the growth of the mining and ranching industries in the West. This section discusses the beginning of farming on the Great Plains.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the diagram below to help you take notes. The Great Plains was at first thought of as a desert. List the reasons that helped to change that image of the Great Plains and encourage settlement there.



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Chapter 13, Section 2 (continued)

READ TO LEARN

- **Geography of the Plains** (page 420)

The **Great Plains** is the region that stretches from the 100th meridian to the Rocky Mountains. The region receives less than 20 inches of rain per year, and few trees grow there. In 1819 Major **Stephen Long** led an expedition through the region and declared it to be a desert and not fit for settlement.

5. Why did Stephen Long declare the Great Plains a desert?

- **The Beginnings of Settlement** (page 421)

In the late 1800s, several things changed the image of the Great Plains as being a desert. Railroad companies sold land along the rail lines that they built through the Plains. They sold the land at low prices, attracting settlers there. Railroads opened offices throughout the United States and Europe. They advertised the Plains as being a ticket to prosperity. A Nebraskan encouraged settlement by claiming that farming the Plains would increase rainfall there. In the 1870s, the weather seemed to support that claim. Starting then, rainfall on the Plains was well above average. This helped to change the popular belief that the region was a desert.

The government supported settlement of the Great Plains by passing the **Homestead Act** in 1862. An individual could file for a **homestead**, or a tract of public land available for settlement, for a \$10 registration fee. People could claim up to 160 acres of public land. They could receive title to that land after living there for five years.

The environment was harsh for the settlers on the Plains. Summer temperatures soared above 100°F, and winters brought blizzards. Prairie fires were a danger, and sometimes grasshoppers destroyed crops.

6. How did the government encourage settlement of the Great Plains?

- **The Wheat Belt** (page 422)

New farming methods and inventions helped to make farming on the Great Plains profitable. One method was called **dry farming**. It involved planting seeds deep in the ground where there was enough moisture for them to grow. By the 1860s, farmers were using newly designed steel plows, reapers, and threshing machines. The new machines made it possible to work large areas of land quickly. However, dry prairie soil was often blown away, especially in

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a dry season. Many **sodbusters**, or those who plowed the soil on the Plains, eventually lost their homesteads because of drought or wind erosion.

New technology helped large landholders make quick profits. Mechanical reapers speeded the harvest. Wheat could stand drought better than some other crops. As a result, wheat became an important crop to the Great Plains. More and more people moved to the Great Plains to take advantage of the inexpensive land and the new technology. The **Wheat Belt** eventually included much of the Dakotas and the western parts of Nebraska and Kansas.

The new technology allowed some farms to become very large. These **bonanza farms** brought huge profits to their owners. By the 1880s, the Wheat Belt helped to make the United States the world's leading exporter of wheat. However, the nation faced competition from other wheat-producing countries. In the 1890s, an oversupply of wheat on the market caused prices to drop.

To make it through bad times, some farmers took out loans based on the value of their property. If they did not meet their payments, they had to forfeit the land to the bank and give up their farms. Many worked as tenant farmers for the new owner.

Plains farmers also faced a long drought that began in the late 1880s. The drought destroyed the crops and forced many farmers back east. Although many farmers gave up and headed back, many more took their place.

7. What forced many Plains farmers in the late 1880s to give up their farms and head back east?

• **Closing the Frontier** (page 423)

On April 22, 1889, the government opened for settlement one of the last large territories, land that later became the state of Oklahoma. Within hours, the "Oklahoma Land Rush" began as over 10,000 people raced to stake claims.

In 1890 the Census Bureau reported that settlement throughout the West had been so quick that the frontier was closed. Although there still was much unoccupied land, many people believed that this was the end of an era.

8. Why did the Census Bureau report that the frontier was closed?

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Chapter 13, Section 3

For use with textbook pages 425–430

NATIVE AMERICANS

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

nomads people who roam great distances (page 425)

annuity payment to reservation dwellers (page 426)

Little Crow a chief of the Dakota (page 426)

Indian Peace Commission a commission formed by Congress in 1867, which created two reservations on the Great Plains (page 428)

George A. Custer United States military leader in the Battle of the Little Bighorn (page 429)

Ghost Dance a ritual performed by the Lakota Sioux (page 430)

assimilate to be absorbed into (page 430)

allotment parcel of land (page 430)

Dawes Act a law passed by Congress in 1887 as an attempt to assimilate Native Americans into American society (page 430)

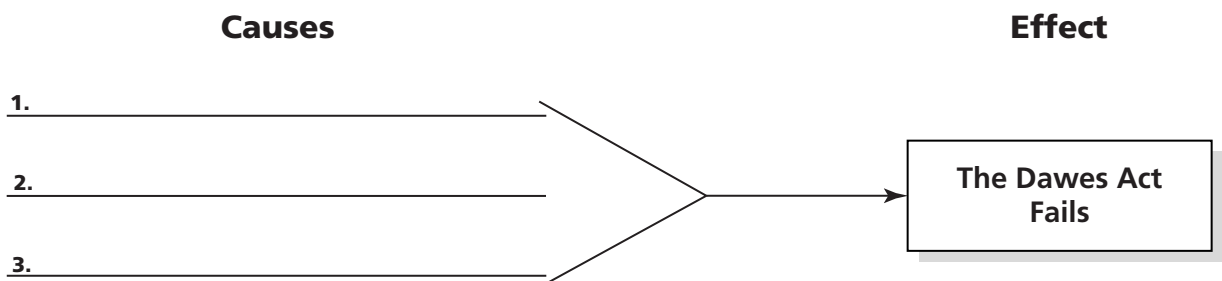
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

How would you feel if someone forced you and your family to move from where you are living and settle in a place that he or she chose for you? How would you feel if you were forced to change your way of life?

The last section discussed the development of farming on the Great Plains. This section discusses the effect of settlement on the Great Plains on Native Americans in the region.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the cause-and-effect diagram below to help you take notes. In the 1880s, the government passed the Dawes Act as an attempt to absorb Native Americans into American society. List the reasons the Dawes Act failed.



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Chapter 13, Section 3 (continued)



READ TO LEARN

- **Culture of the Plains Indians** (page 425)

Most of the Native Americans who lived on the Great Plains were **nomads** who roamed great distances. They followed the buffalo—their main source of food.

The groups of Native Americans on the Great Plains had differences, but they were similar in many ways. They lived in extended family networks. Plains Indian nations were divided into bands of up to 500 people each. A governing council headed each band. Most members of the band participated in making decisions for the group. Gender determined the tasks an individual had to do. Most Plains Indians practiced a religion that was based on a belief in the spiritual power of the natural world.

4. What was the main source of food for the Plains Indians?

- **Cultures Under Pressure** (page 426)

Native Americans resisted the advance of settlers on their lands. They resented the broken treaties of the government and their forced movement from their lands. They resisted by attacking wagon trains and ranches. Eventually the resistance turned into a war.

The Dakota Sioux had agreed to live on a small reservation in Minnesota. In exchange for moving there, the U.S. government issued **annuities**, or payments to the Native Americans at least once per year. The money did not amount to much, and much of it ended up in the hands of American traders. These traders often made up fake debts owed them by the Dakota and took the annuities as payments.

In August 1862, the government was a month late in paying the annuities. As a result, some of the Dakota were starving. Chief **Little Crow** asked the traders to give the Dakota food on credit. When they refused, he led an uprising. Angry Dakota slaughtered soldiers and civilians in the area. U.S. troops then put down the uprising. The military sentenced 307 Dakota to death for taking part in the uprising. President Lincoln reduced the number to 38.

After the uprising, the army sent patrols far into the northern Great Plains to prevent further trouble with the Sioux there. This caused more conflict. The soldiers came into contact with the Lakota, a branch of the Sioux. The Lakota hunting grounds extended from the Black Hills westward to the Bighorn Mountains. They intended to fight to keep their lands. Their chiefs included Red Cloud, Crazy Horse, and Sitting Bull.

In 1866 Red Cloud's forces defeated the U.S. army in a battle in Montana that became known as Fetterman's Massacre. Tensions also arose in Colorado, where thousands of settlers were moving in. Native Americans began raiding

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Chapter 13, Section 3 (continued)

wagon trains, and many settlers were killed. The governor of the territory ordered the Native Americans to surrender at Fort Lyon. He said they would be given protection and food. Those that did not surrender would be attacked. Although several hundred surrendered, many did not. In November 1864, Chief Black Kettle brought several hundred Cheyenne to negotiate a peace deal. The fort's commander did not have the authority to negotiate, so he told the Chief to wait at Sand Creek while he waited for orders. Then Colonel John Chivington was ordered to attack the Cheyenne there. When he stopped at Fort Lyon, Chivington was told that the Native Americans were waiting at Sand Creek to negotiate a peace deal. Chivington claimed there would be no peace. No one knows how events actually happened. However, reports said the Chivington's troops attacked the Cheyenne, killing hundreds of women and children. Chivington was investigated by a Senate committee, which decided not to charge him.

Conflicts such as the Fetterman's and the Sand Creek Massacres convinced Congress that something had to be done. In 1867 Congress formed an **Indian Peace Commission**. It proposed to create two large reservations—one for the Sioux and another for southern Plains Indians. Agents from the Bureau of Indian Affairs would run the reservations. However, many Native Americans refused to move to the reservations. Those who did move faced miserable conditions.

5. Why did Congress form the Indian Peace Commission?

• The Last Native American Wars (page 429)

By the 1870s, many Native Americans had left the reservations. They hated their life there and joined those who did not move there to hunt buffalo on the open Plains. However, the buffalo were quickly disappearing. People crossing the Plains had killed off thousands. After the Civil War, professional buffalo hunters killed buffalo for their hides to ship to markets in the East. Other hunters killed merely for the sport. Railroad companies hired people to kill large numbers of buffalo that were blocking rail lines. The government encouraged this killing because it forced Native Americans onto reservations.

In 1876 miners overran the Lakota Sioux reservation to mine gold in the Black Hills. Seeing that the whites were violating the treaty, many Lakota left the reservation to hunt near the Bighorn Mountains in southeastern Montana. The government sent an expedition that included Lieutenant Colonel **George A. Custer**. On June 25, 1876, he attacked one of the largest groups of Native American warriors to ever come together on the Great Plains. It was made up of 2,500 Lakota and Cheyenne warriors camped along the Little Bighorn River. The warriors responded to the attack by Custer and about 210 soldiers

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by killing all of them. The army then stepped up its campaign against the Native Americans. Some Native Americans, led by Sitting Bull, fled to Canada. Other Lakota were forced back on the reservation.

In 1877 members of the Nez Perce, led by Chief Joseph, refused to move from their lands to a reservation in Idaho. When the army came to force them to move, they fled for more than 1,300 miles. However, in October 1877, after losing many of his followers in battles, Chief Joseph surrendered. His followers were moved to Oklahoma.

The Lakota continued to perform the **Ghost Dance**, a ritual that was important to them, on the Lakota Sioux Reservation. They did so against the orders of the government agent at the reservation. The ritual celebrated a hoped-for day when settlers would disappear and the buffalo would return. The government agent thought the ritual was threatening. He blamed the refusal to stop the Ghost Dance on Sitting Bull. When police came to arrest him, Sitting Bull resisted. He died in an exchange of gunfire. The Native Americans who participated in the Ghost Dance then fled the reservation. The troops went after them. On December 29, 1890, a battle broke out at Wounded Knee Creek. About 25 soldiers and 200 Lakota were killed.

6. Why did the United States government support the killing of the buffalo on the Great Plains?

• **Assimilation** (page 430)

Some Americans had opposed the government's treatment of Native Americans. Helen Hunt Jackson's book, *A Century of Dishonor*, described the government's broken promises and attacks on Native Americans. Her descriptions led to discussions, even in Congress, of better treatment of Native Americans. Some people believed that the Native Americans' situation would improve if they could **assimilate**, or be absorbed, into American culture as citizens and landowners. This meant breaking up the reservations into individual **allotments**, or pieces of land, where families could support themselves.

In 1887 Congress passed the **Dawes Act**. It gave each head of a household 160 acres of reservation land for farming. Although some Native Americans succeeded as farmers, many did not want to be farmers. Many found that the size of the land they received was too small to be profitable.

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Chapter 13, Section 3 (continued)

In the end, the idea of assimilation failed. There was no satisfactory solution to the problem of the Native Americans. The Plains Indians were doomed because they depended on the buffalo for food, shelter, and clothing. Once the herds were wiped out, the Native Americans could not keep up their way of life. Few were willing to adopt the settlers' way of life.

7. What did some people in the late 1800s believe was necessary to improve the situation of Native Americans?
