

Name _____

Date _____

The Plains Wars

In the 1800s, Americans began to move further west in the New World. As they did so, Native American tribes began to lose their lands. Native Americans were experiencing a destruction of their traditions and culture.

Native American tribes in the plains areas depended on the buffalo to meet most of their needs. Buffalos provided shelter, food, and tools. With the construction of the transcontinental railroad, thousands of Americans began settling westward. In the process, these settlers killed or were responsible for the death of most of the buffalo population. Prior to the westward expansion, there were millions of buffalos living in the plains areas. By 1890, the buffalo population was less than a thousand. This meant that the Native American tribes in the plains region were unable to survive in the traditional way.

American settlers often tried to take land from the Native Americans. The government of the United States failed to honor the treaties that had been previously made. Instead, the government attempted to put the tribes on reservations. Reservations are small pieces of land set apart for Native Americans. Many tribes rebelled against this treatment and began fighting back.

The Lakota, the Sioux, and the Arapaho banded together in 1874 to protect the tribal lands that were surrounding the Black Hills. This area is in what is now known as South Dakota. A group of Americans that discovered gold offered the Native Americans \$6 million to purchase this land, but the Native American tribes refused to sell.

Since the tribes refused to sell, General George Custer decided to take the land from the Native Americans using force. He took six hundred American troops into battle. Led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, the Native Americans had over 2,000 fighters. Over two hundred of the Americans, including General Custer, were killed. The battle became known as Custer's Last Stand. This was the last real victory for the Native Americans.

The US government was willing to use force to claim the lands they wanted. For the next decade, Americans fought Native Americans, and the Americans typically won. At Wounded Knee, which is also in South Dakota, over two hundred Sioux men, children, and women were killed by American troops. This occurred even though the Sioux had surrendered to the Americans the night before. The massacre at Wounded Knee took place in 1890.

The US government believed that it was making the area safe for settlers by killing the Native Americans. It is tragic that the Native American culture was nearly destroyed as a result of the aggressiveness of the Americans.

From 1800 to 1900, the American people succeeded in settling westward and expanding the country. Technological advances, such as the invention of barbed wire and steel plows, further enabled settlers to successfully live in new areas. Thousands of people began living the American dream by starting over in a new land.

While many see the 18th century as a century of progress, there was a cost associated with that progress. While Americans invented tools to become more successful at farming and traveled, building new towns and cities, life was forever changed for Native Americans. Many were slaughtered or forced from their lands.

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The Plains Wars Questions

Fill In:

1. Native American tribes in the plains areas depended on the _____ to meet most of their needs.
2. _____ are small pieces of land set apart for Native Americans.
3. The Lakota, the Sioux, and the Arapaho banded together in 1874 to protect the tribal lands that were surrounding the Black Hills, which is an area now known as _____.
4. The battle considered as the real victory for the Native Americans is known as _____.
5. With the construction of the transcontinental _____ thousands of Americans began settling westward.

Multiple Choice:

6. The massacre where over two hundred Sioux men, children, and women were killed by American troops took place at:
 - a. Cutler's Last Stand
 - b. Wounded Knee
 - c. North Dakota
 - d. None of the above
7. By 1890, the buffalo population was less than:
 - a. A million
 - b. Ten thousand
 - c. A thousand
 - d. A hundred

True or False:

- _____ 8. Native Americans depended on buffalos to provide them with food, shelter, and tools.
- _____ 9. From 1700 to 1800, the American people succeeded in settling westward and expanding the country.
- _____ 10. After the discovery of gold, a group of Americans offered Native American tribes \$ 8 million to buy their lands.
- _____ 11. Over two hundred Americans, including General Custer, were killed during the battle known as Custer's Last Stand.

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The Plains Wars Answers

Fill In:

1. Native American tribes in the plains areas depended on the ___**buffalo**___ to meet most of their needs.
2. ___**Reservations**___ are small pieces of land set apart for Native Americans.
3. The Lakota, the Sioux, and the Arapaho banded together in 1874 to protect the tribal lands that were surrounding the Black Hills, which is an area now known as ___**South Dakota**___.
4. The battle considered as the real victory for the Native Americans is known as ___**Custer's Last Stand**___.
5. With the construction of the transcontinental ___**railroad**___ thousands of Americans began settling westward.

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