

Frontier Wars Advanced

Unit 10: Cotton, Cattle, & Railroads

Name:

Date:

Period:

The Civil War and the West Texas Frontier, 1861 – 1865

When the Civil War began in 1861, United States army troops stationed at forts along the west Texas frontier were removed from the state. Throughout the war, the Texas state government struggled to defend the frontier, sending Rangers and volunteers to defend against raids by tribes along the Great Plains.

When the Civil War ended in 1865, most Texas volunteers who had been sent to protect the frontier went home, and the United States army gradually began to reoccupy Texas's western forts.

In the absence of a strong military presence along the frontier, the Comanche and Kiowa Indians mounted numerous deadly raids on frontier settlements.

1. How was the west Texas frontier affected by the outbreak and end of the Civil War?

The Medicine Lodge Treaty, October 1867

In response to the ongoing Indian raids along the Texas frontier and elsewhere along the Great Plains, the Federal government met with representatives from the Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes in October 1867, at Medicine Lodge Creek in Kansas to negotiate a peace agreement.

The United States government signed the Medicine Lodge Treaty with the tribes assembled. The tribes who signed agreed to give up their claims to the Great Plains and to live on federal reservations in exchange for food and supplies.

The Medicine Lodge Treaty had limited success, and some bands of Plains tribes continued raiding along the frontier.

2. What was the Medicine Lodge Treaty and was it successful in accomplishing its goals?

The Salt Creek Massacre, Spring 1871

In May 1871, a Kiowa chief named Satanta led an attack against a twelve-man wagon train that was journeying from Fort Griffin to Fort Richardson in North Texas, killing seven of the twelve men. This event is often referred to as the Warren Wagon Train Raid or the Salt Creek Massacre.

In response to the Salt Creek Massacre, the United States Army mounted a military campaign against bands of Plains tribes who refused to live on the designated reservations in Oklahoma, including the Comanche, Apache, and Kickapoo.

3. What was the Salt Creek Massacre and how was it significant to Texas history?

The Destruction of the American Buffalo

Many nomadic tribes of the Great Plains like the Comanche and Kiowa depended on the American buffalo for food, clothing, shelter, and tools.

In the 1870s, more and more white hunters in Texas and the rest of the Great Plains began hunting buffalo to meet the growing demand for leather made from buffalo hides. By the 1880s, approximately 3.5 million buffalo had been killed. This had a profound impact on Plains tribes who depended on the buffalo for survival.

The depletion of the American buffalo combined with increased pressure from the U.S. military forced many bands of Kiowa and Comanche on the Texas Plains to abandon the Plains and move to reservations in Oklahoma.

The U.S. government had promised to provide food and supplies to tribes that moved to the reservations. The government, however, often failed to provide these rations to the Kiowa and Comanche who had recently settled on the reservations. Additionally, the government was unable to prevent white settlers from encroaching on reservation lands, further straining the relationship between American Indians and the United States.

4. List three issues that tribes of the Texas Great Plains faced during this era AND explain one significant effect or consequence of each issue.

The Red River War, 1874 - 1875

Frustrated by the continued encroachments of white settlers on Indian reservations, a war party of 700 Comanches, Kiowas, and Cheyennes led by Quanah Parker mounted an attack on a camp of buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls in the Texas panhandle in June 1874. The war party then took refuge in the Texas panhandle.

The U.S. Army responded to the fight at Adobe Walls by sending 5,000 troops, including Buffalo Soldiers, to confront the last of the Plains Indians. A number of small fights occurred from summer 1874 to spring 1875, including when the U.S. Army attacked the Plains Indians camped in the Palo Duro Canyon, killing several Indians, destroying five villages, and capturing 1,400 horses.

Without food, shelter, or horses, Quanah Parker and his men surrendered on June 2, 1875, and moved to the reservation in Oklahoma. The Red River War, as it came to be known, was the last time the Comanches and their allies were able to mount a significant military force against the U.S. Army in Texas.

By the end of the Red River War, the U.S. Army had driven the majority of American Indian tribes out of Texas, and Comanche dominance of the Plains came to an end. The only tribes that remained in Texas in 1880 were the Alabama-Coushatta in east Texas and the Tigua in El Paso.

5. What caused the outbreak of the Red River War?
6. In two or three sentences, summarize the Red River War.
7. What was the outcome and significance of the Red River War?