

FORT LARAMIE AND EARLY TREATIES

- The Indians Appropriations Act made funds available for moving the Indians out of the way of the settlers. (1851)
- The first step on the road to reservations was the Fort Laramie Treaty in 1851 which set out tribal boundaries, committed the Indians to ending fighting between the tribes, allowed migrants to travel through their lands safely, permitted surveyors from railroad companies to enter their lands in safety, and allowed the government to build roads through their lands and build army posts.
- The US agreed to protect Plains Indians from white Americans, including migrants seeking to settle on Plains Indian lands, and lastly they agreed to pay the tribes an annuity of \$50,000 as long as the treaty terms were upheld.
- However, if the Indians broke any part of their agreement then the annuities or food and supplies could be withheld and the Indians would also have to pay compensation.
- This also spelled the end of the Permanent Frontier and allowed for the disintegration of the Indian Way of Life. Further treaties like Fort Wise in 1861 and the Treaty of Medicine Lodge in 1867 further reduced reservation size.

THE GHOST DANCE AND WOUNDED KNEE

- The Paiute Medicine Man called Wovoka had a dream in 1889 that all of the troubles of the Native Americans would disappear, as would all of the white Americans. This started a revolution in which the Sioux danced together to make this happen – doing the Ghost Dance, mainly because this coincided with a drought and desperation among the tribes with the lack of government support.
- This scared the US government so in 1890 Sitting Bull was killed during his arrest and his successor Big Foot and 146 (including seven babies under 2) of his tribe of Sioux were massacred on 28th December 1890 at Wounded Knee by the 7th Cavalry – the same unit that had been wiped out on the hills on the Big Horn. This time they had repeating rifles and a Hotchkiss cannon.
- This spelled the end of Indian resistance as news of the massacre was met with praise in the American press, justified as necessary to tame the savage

THE DAWES ACT AND OKLAHOMA RUSH

- The Dawes Act of 1887 gave each Indian family, a 160 acre share of reservation land. Single Indians were given 80 acres and orphans under 18 got 40 acres. Indians who took up this offer and left the reservation could then become US citizens, and any land left over could be sold to white people. This encouraged individualism and stopped them relying on the tribe.
- Those that did take up allotments often found it impossible to make a living farming the Plains. The soil too poor and amount of land too little. Most gave up, sold their land to white Americans and ended up landless or divided up the land into even smaller plots by passing it onto their children, which made matters worse than before!
- It also reduced the cost to the federal government of running the reservation system and many were also cheated out of their land by whites. By 1890, Plains Indians had lost half of the lands they had had in 1887 to white settlers
- In 1889, the US opened up the middle section of Indian Territory in Oklahoma for white settlement. Several land rushes followed in 1889 (2 million acres) and ending in 1895 (88,000 acres). The largest land rush was in 1893, when 8 million acres were opened up for settlement.

ISSUES WHICH LED TO INDIAN DEFEAT

INDIAN DEFEAT

- **Railways** – They lead to the settlement of 300m acres of the Plains. This reduced buffalo grazing land, bringing in white hunters that would slaughter the buffalo, increase migration and the settlement. This would restrict the movement of the buffalo and the Indians and increase stress on the grass stocks as the buffalo competed with cattle. The Indians lost the right to lands granted to railroads and so in 1870, the Pawnee agreed to move to a reservation in Indian Territory, the Omaha, Santee Sioux and Winnebago moved to Nebraska. The Northern Pacific Railroad also ran through Dakota, Montana and Washington territories, where thousands of Plains Indians still lived but not for long.
- **Buffalo** - The buffalo, were decimated by the rise of the beef industry. In 1860 130,000 cattle were in the West, all in Kansas and Nebraska. In 1880, there were 4.5 million cattle, in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and Dakota. Some Indians abandoned their way of life to work on ranches. Other tribes, especially the Comanche, resented any trespassers on their lands, and attacked cowboys, stealing horses and cattle which lead to more conflict with the Army. President Grant vetoed a bill to prevent the destruction of the Buffalo in 1874. The Buffalo had become weakened by hunting, competition over grass with cattle and lack of access to water sources taken up by the homesteaders and the ranchers. In the 1870’s they were hunted for their coats but this became a lot worse in 1871 when it became apparent that their skin was perfect for creating the belts used in Industrial machines. Buffalo hide was cheap, only \$1-\$3 a pop so they were killed en-masse, 4½ million between 1872-74, . In 1880, 5,000 white people were out killing buffalo. By 1883 the once-vast herds of buffalo, which had been in excess of 25 million, had gone. By 1890 wild buffalo were a thing of the past. The Indians lost their way of life and now their hunting grounds too.
- **Gold** - prospectors murdered Indians, particularly in California and brought weapons and disease and towns alien to Indian culture after 1848. The discovery of gold in 1858 in Colorado helped lead to the growth of ranching and the Cheyenne War; in Montana in 1862 led to Red Cloud’s War; in Dakota in 1874 lead to the Great Sioux War
- **Reservations and Peace Policy** - They lost their land and way of life. Chiefs had no authority to make bands or brotherhoods stay on the reservation, especially when sacred places were elsewhere, they had to share with enemies and farming was almost impossible. This lead to sanctions on the Indians such as the withholding of vital food supplies and their removal onto smaller reservations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs appointed agents who ran each reservation but they were often. In 1868 US President Grant put forward a peace policy, which aimed to calm tensions by improving the management of the reservation system, putting Quakers in charge of reservations with \$2m for Indian welfare. However, Ely Parker pushed for treating Indians like Wards and the Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 was passed, which declared that Plains Indian nations or tribes would no longer be recognised ‘as an independent nation, tribe or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty’. There would be no more negotiation. Tribal Council were replaced by special councils and In 1883, special courts took legal power over the reservations followed by federal control in 1885. By 1887, 2,020 Indian children were at 117 boarding schools and 2,500 were in 110 day schools.. Upon graduation they couldn’t function in either white or Indian society. Depression and hopelessness spread, as did alcoholism and suicide

