

Changes on the Western Frontier

Cultures Clash on the Prairie

Guiding Question:
How did cultural differences between
Natives & Settlers lead to violence &
conflict?





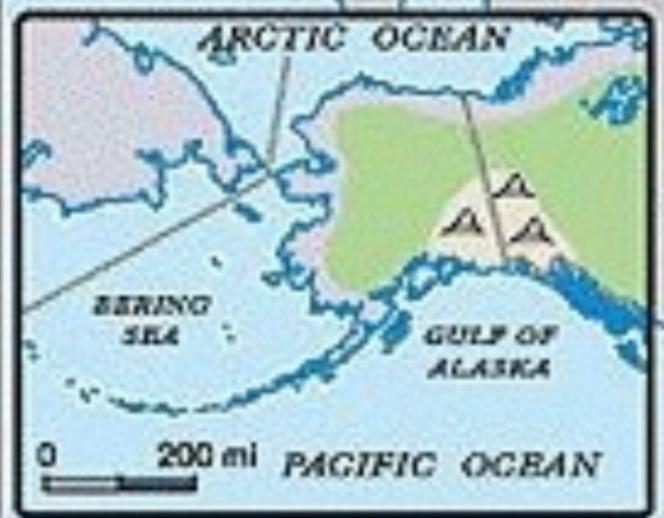
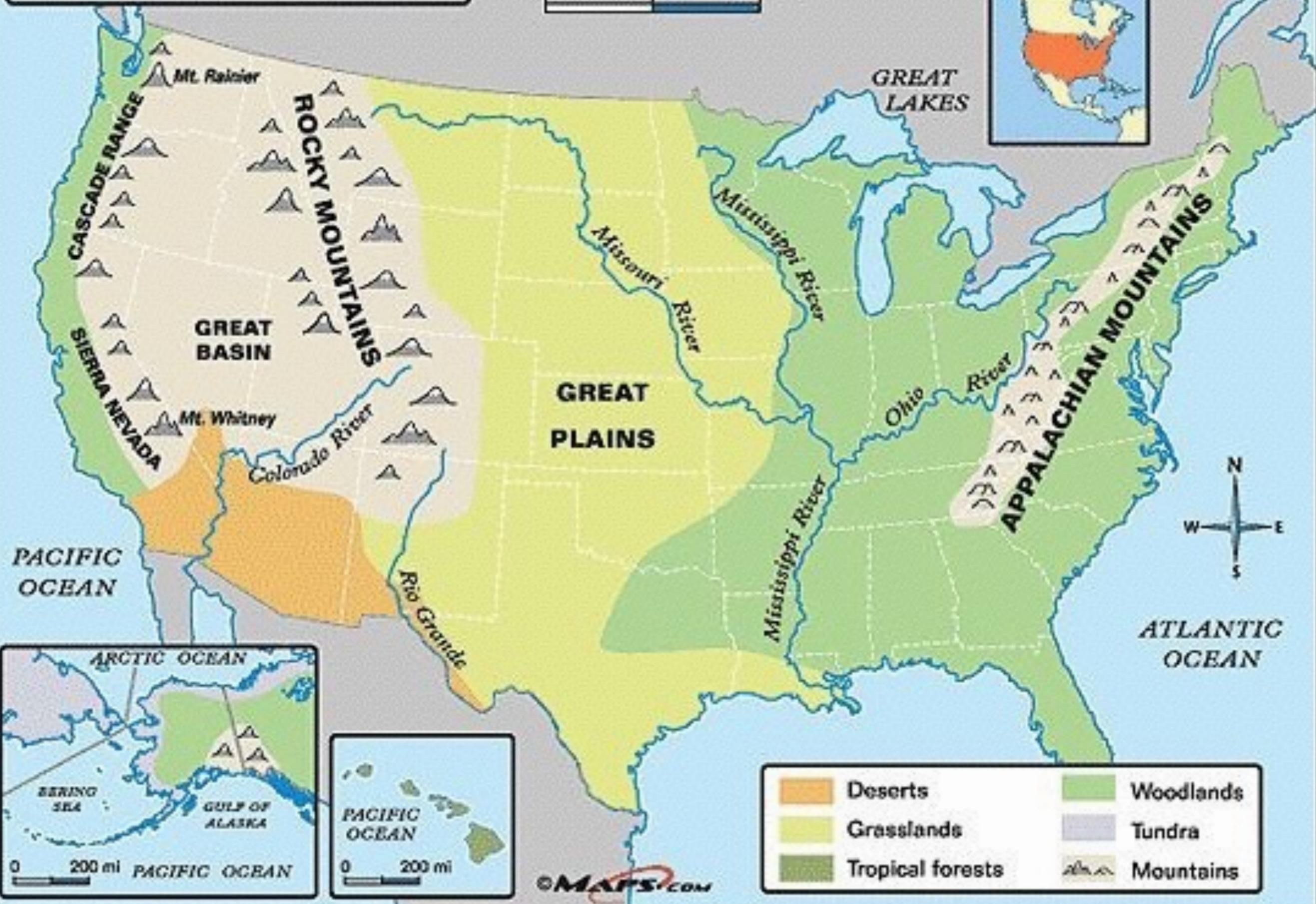
The Culture of the Plains Indians

WHERE

- Great Plains—grasslands in west-central portion of the U.S.
- East: hunting, farming villages
- West: nomadic hunting, gathering

United States

0 250 500 mi





The Horse and the Buffalo

- Horses, guns lead most Plains tribes to nomadic life by mid-1700s
 - Trespassing others' hunting lands causes war; count coup for status
- **Buffalo** provides many basic needs:
 - skins used for housing and clothing
 - meat used for jerky, pemmican
 - **Horses** allow for hunting of buffalo & nomadic life (travel further & faster)





Family Life

- Form family groups with ties to other bands that speak the same language
 - Men are hunters, warriors; women butcher meat, prepare hides
- Believe in powerful spirits that control the natural world (men or women can become shamans)
- Children learn through myths, stories, games, example
- Communal life; leaders rule by counsel

Clash of Cultures

- Native Americans: land cannot be owned; settlers: want to own land
- Settlers think native forfeited land because did not improve it
- Since consider land unsettled, migrants go west to claim it



The Lure of Silver and Gold

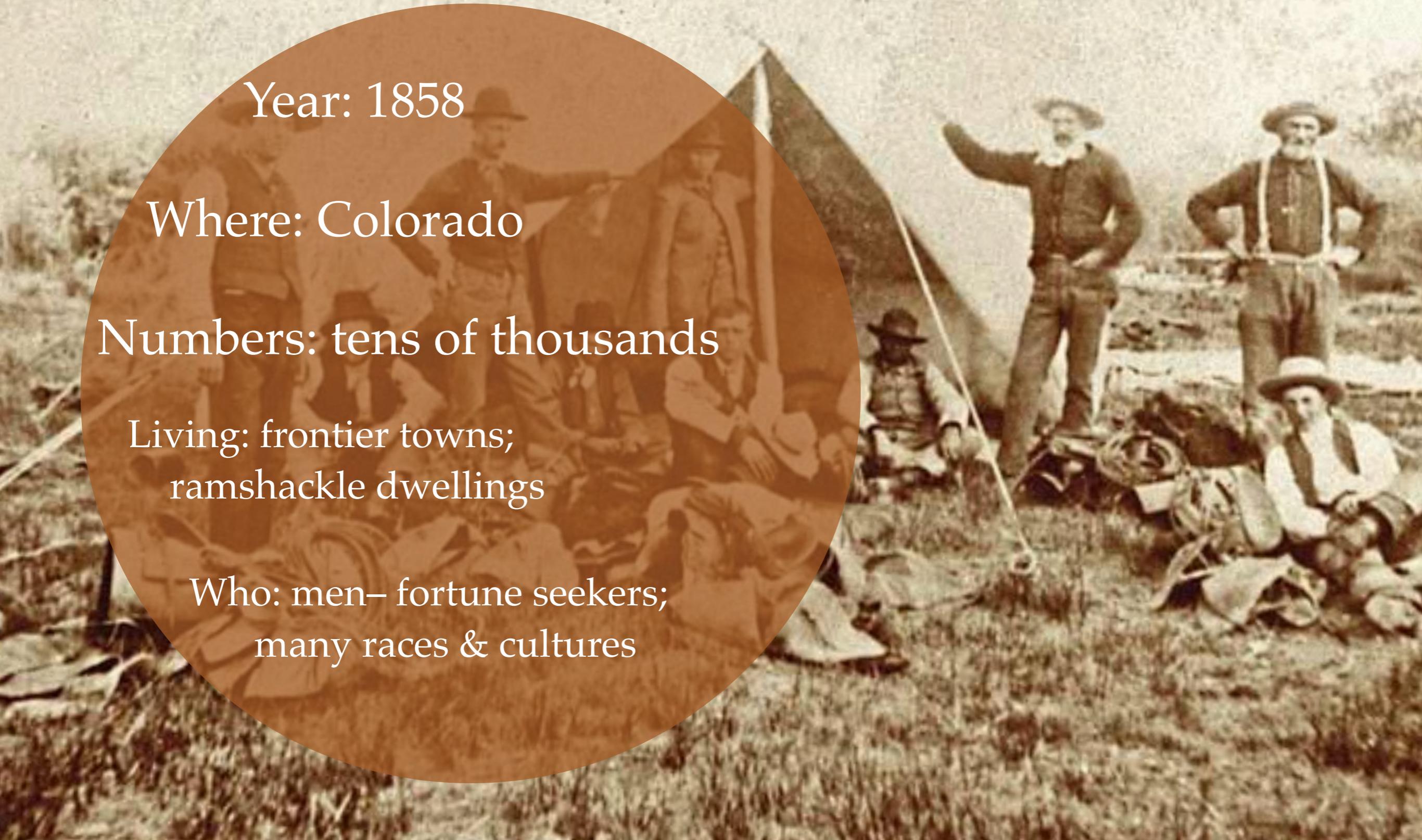
Year: 1858

Where: Colorado

Numbers: tens of thousands

Living: frontier towns;
ramshackle dwellings

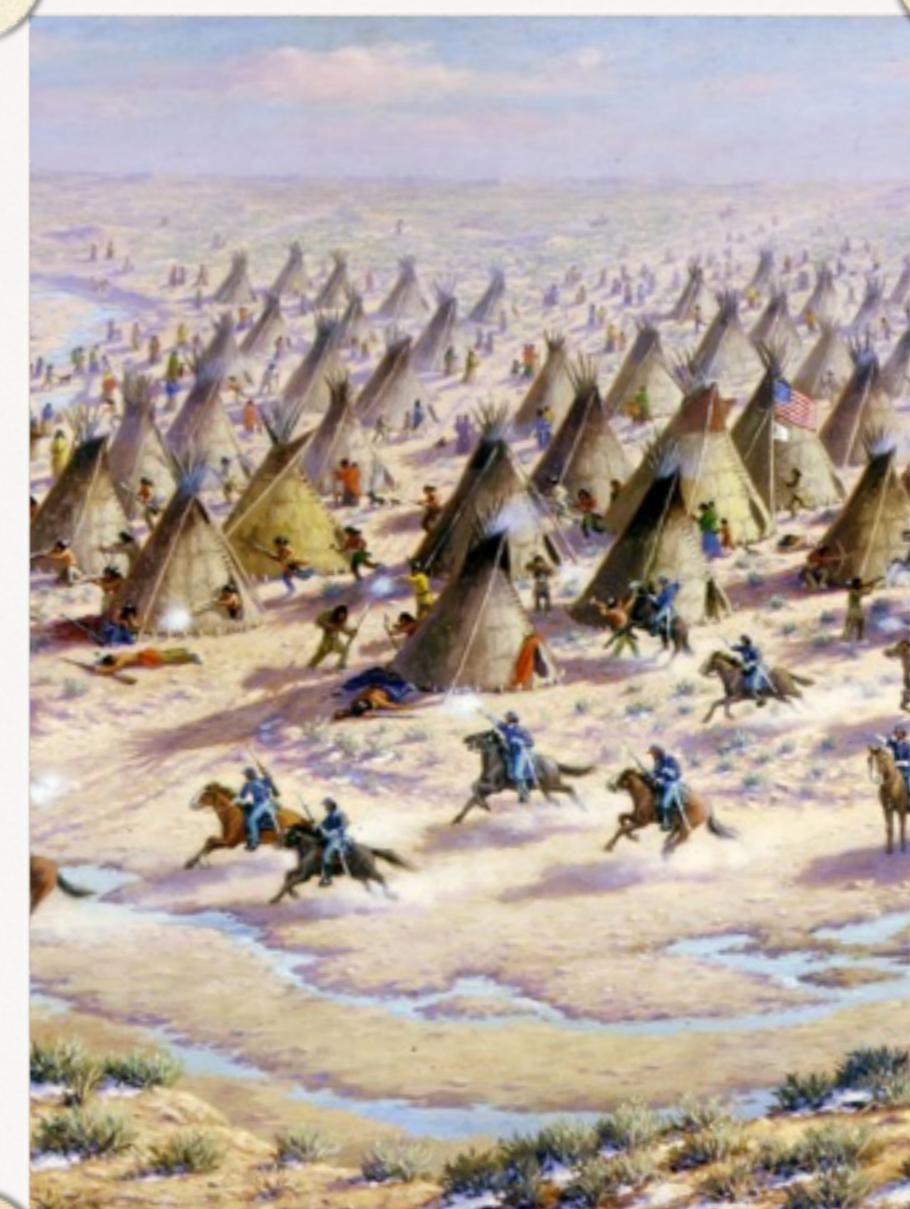
Who: men— fortune seekers;
many races & cultures



Guiding Question:
How did Natives & Settlers respond
to the clash of cultural differences?

Railroads Influence Government Policy

- 1834, government designates Great Plains as one huge reservation
- 1850s, treaties define specific boundaries for each tribe
- Massacre at Sand Creek: troops kill over 150 Cheyenne, Arapaho at Sand Creek winter camp





"The Sand Creek Massacre" by Robert Lindneaux, 1936

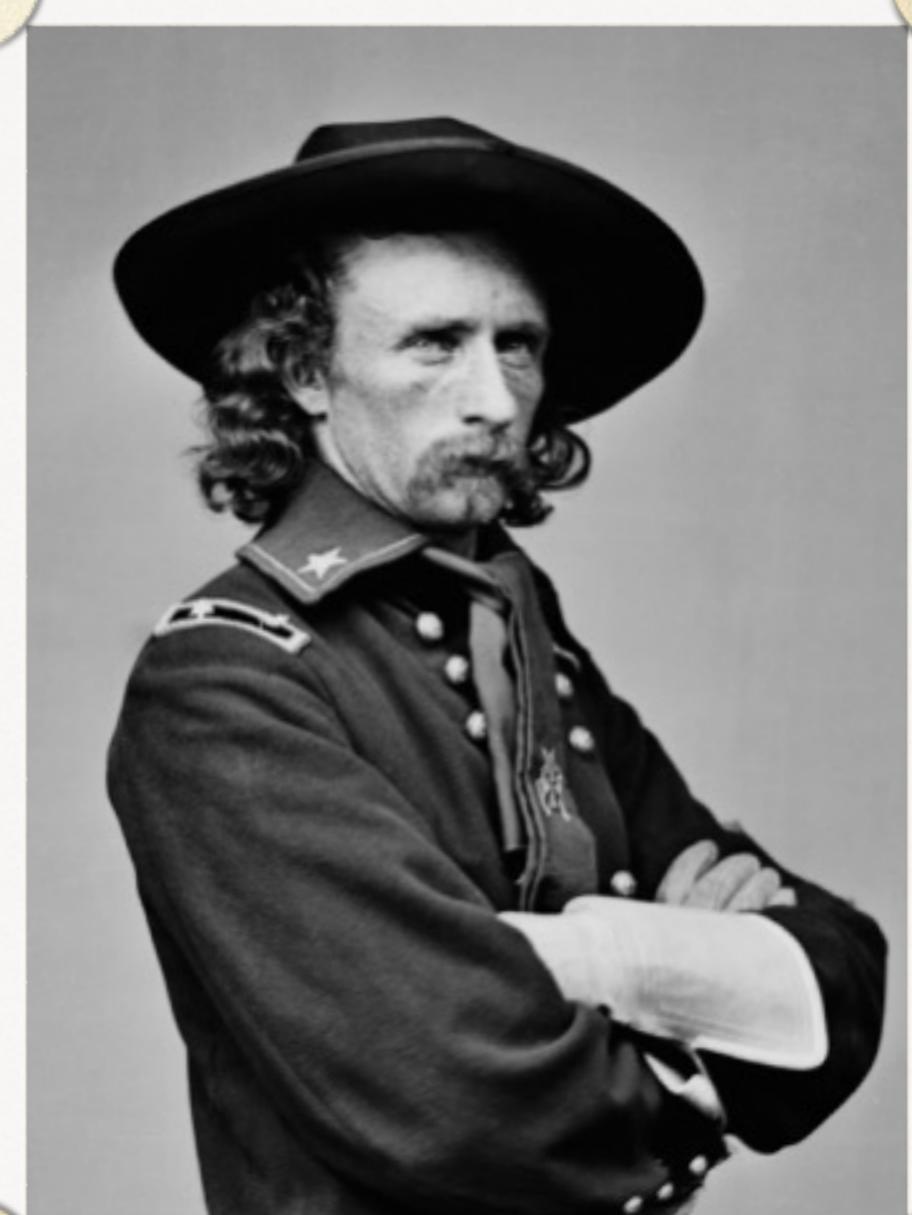
Death on the Bozeman Trail

- Bozeman Trail crosses Sioux hunting grounds
- skirmishes & massacres result
- Treaty of Fort Laramie—U.S. closes trail; Sioux to reservation
- Sitting Bull, leader of Hunkpapa Sioux, does not sign treaty



Red River War

- 1868, Kiowa, Comanche engage in 6 years of raiding
- Gold Rush: 1874, George A. Custer reports much gold in Black Hills, rush begins



Custer's Last Stand

- 1876, Sitting Bull's vision
- Sioux crush Custer & his men; natives still beaten & flee to Canada
- By late 1876, Sioux are defeated; some take refuge in Canada— people starving; Sitting Bull surrenders (1881)





“The Battle of Little Bighorn” by Kurz and Allison, 1889



The Government Supports Assimilation

- 1881, Helen Hunt Jackson exposes problems in *A Century of Dishonor*
- **Assimilation**—natives to give up way of life, join Western culture



The Dawes Act

- 1887, Dawes Act to “Americanize” natives, break up reservations
- Gives land to individual Native Americans
- Sell remainder of land to settlers
- Money for farm implements for natives
- In the end, Native Americans receive only 1/3 of land, no money



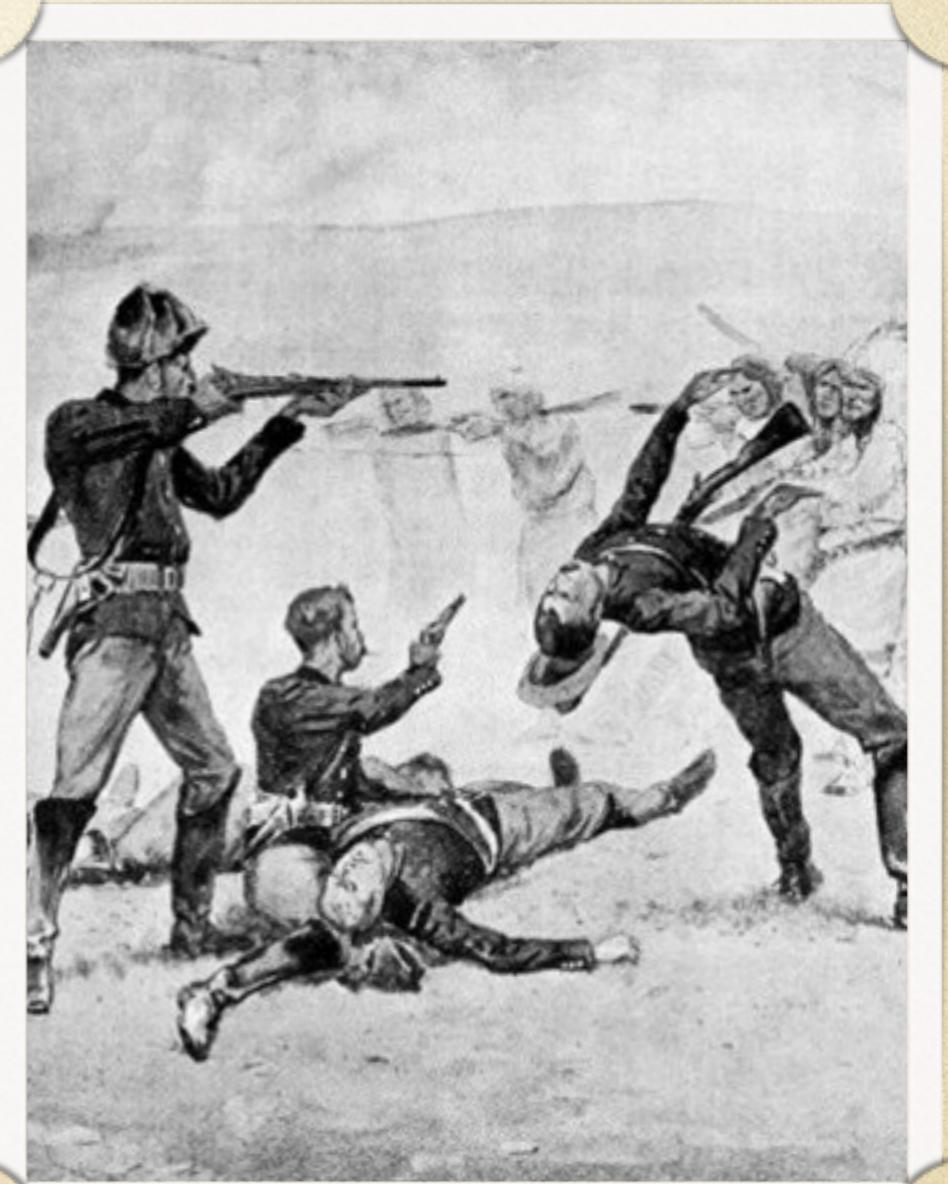


The Destruction of the Buffalo

- Tourists, fur traders shoot for sport, destroy buffalo population
- natives lose source of food, clothing, fuel, etc

The Battle of Wounded Knee

- Ghost Dance—ritual to regain lost lands; spreads among Sioux on Dakota reservation
- December 1890, Sitting Bull is killed when police try to arrest him
- Seventh Cavalry takes about 350 Sioux to Wounded Knee Creek
- **Battle of Wounded Knee**—cavalry kill 300 unarmed Native Americans
- Battle ends Indian wars, Sioux dream of regaining old life





“The Opening of the Fight at Wounded Knee” by
Frederic Remington, 1891