

CHAPTER  
**3**  
SECTION 3

**Section Summary**  
**THE SOUTH AND WEST TRANSFORMED**

After the Civil War, southerners developed a new mixed economy. Textile mills were built, the timber industry expanded, and railway construction boomed. With all the advances, problems persisted. Lack of capital meant heavy borrowing from northern bankers. African Americans were slowly stripped of the political and civil rights they had gained after the Civil War. The **sharecropping** system brought hardships. Landowners gave the sharecropper a place to live, seeds, and tools, in exchange for a share of the harvested crop. Landowners and merchants often cheated sharecroppers.

The end of the war also unleashed a huge wave of migration to the West. Even before large numbers of farmers and ranchers migrated west, hunters had already started to undermine the Native Americans' way of life by decimating the great buffalo herds that roamed the Plains.

In the post-Civil War period, the federal government forced the Plains Indians to move to reservations, or public land specifically reserved for them. Although some Native Americans moved to reservations without a fight, others decided to defend their land. The Battle of Little Bighorn and the retreat of the Nez Percé tribe are examples of Native American resistance.

The United States enacted the **Dawes Act** in 1887, which sought to prompt Native Americans to **assimilate**, or to be absorbed into the main culture of American society through land ownership and the opportunity to become citizens. The act failed to achieve its goal.

In the middle decades of the 1800s, the discovery of gold and silver attracted miners to the West in hopes of making a fortune. Farmers and ranchers came to the West in hopes of owning their own land. The transcontinental railroad opened the West to economic development.

At the end of the Civil War, approximately 5 million head of cattle roamed freely in Texas. These cattle, along with the demand for meat back east, led to the great cattle drives. Beginning in the late 1870s, cattlemen began raising steers on the northern plains where the herds could feed on the **open range**—a vast area of grassland owned by the federal government—and then they could ship the steers from nearby railroads without the difficulty of the long drive.

**Review Questions**

1. Describe the economy of the post-Civil War South.

---



---



---

2. How did the migration to the West affect the Plains Indians?

---



---



---

**READING CHECK**

What law did the United States enact to prompt Native Americans to assimilate?

---



---



---

**VOCABULARY STRATEGY**

What does the word *decades* mean in the underlined sentence? The Latin root *dec* means "ten." Use this root and the context to help you figure out the meaning of *decades*.

---



---



---

**READING SKILL**

**Summarize** Summarize the groups of people who moved west and their reasons for doing so.

---



---



---