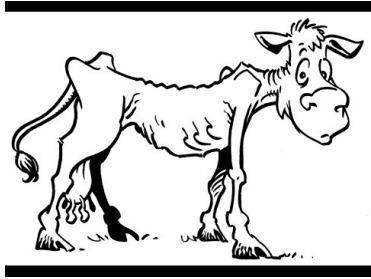


How did the Cattle Industry Develop Part 2

Solution 3 - Set up Ranches on The Plains - The Open Range System

John Iliff and the beginnings of ranching on the Plains

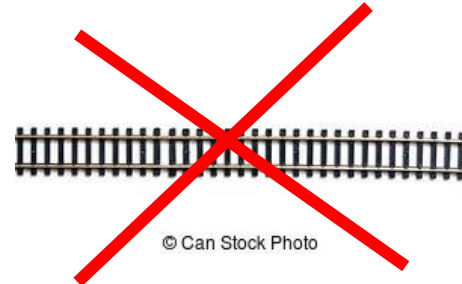


In 1861 John Iliff bought a herd of cattle for \$500- a cheap price because the herd was exhausted after a long drive across the Plains and was too thin to sell for beef. Iliff saw an opportunity that would bring significant changes to the cattle industry.



Also during 1861, another gold rush, this time in the Colorado Rocky Mountains led to an increase in the number of prospectors living in the area. This meant that there was a great demand for meat however there was no rail link to this area at this time.

Iliff spotted the opportunity in the problem; if he could fatten his new herd up on the grass from the Plains, he would be able to sell beef for a good price to the mining towns without the need to move cattle on long drives.



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Iliff also discovered the cold winter on the Plains killed the ticks on the Texan Longhorns meaning they no longer would spread disease to other cattle.



He became a millionaire by using the Plains for a huge open range ranch from which he sold beef to mining towns, teams building the Union Pacific Railroad, and to the government for Plains Indian reservations. In 1872, he won a contract to provide beef to a reservation of 7,000 Sioux Indians.

As he raised his cattle on the Plains, this was the start of a new phase: ranching on the open range of the Plains, rather than driving them up from Texas. Others followed his example. This was going to cause conflicts with the homesteaders who were also moving onto the Plains (and of course the Plains Indians).





The cattle barons

The 1870's saw a 'beef bonanza' in the West. Although the long drives from Texas continued to railheads in Kansas, the big growth was in ranching on the Plains. Through the 1870's, the cattle industry was seen as a sure way to make money: costs were low (free grass, almost free land, cheap transportation by rail) while profits were high. As a result, investors poured money into the industry.

The best way to make a lot of money was to have very large ranches and enormous herds of cattle. The consequence was that a few men, backed by rich investors, dominated the cattle industry. They were called **cattle barons** because of their wealth and influence. Some controlled local politics as well as almost all the land. They defended their interests fiercely, especially against cattle rustling*. (see the Johnson County War for an example to demonstrate this)



*rustling = theft

Tasks:

- 1) Explain how John Iliff changed the cattle industry, particularly in terms of where it was located.
- 2) What is meant by open range farming?
- 3) What were the main benefits of farming cattle in this way and in this location?
- 4) Who were the main markets for his cattle and beef?
- 5) Iliff became Denver's first millionaire; can you predict some consequences for this change in cattle farming that will not be so positive?

New Title:

Rivalry between the Open Range Ranchers and the Homesteaders

- 1) Use pages 57 in the textbook to explain why there was tension between the Open Range Ranchers and the Homesteaders.
- 2) List the tactics and methods which **ranchers used against the homesteaders** to block them using land.
- 3) Barbed wire became an important tool for one side to use - can you decide who would welcome the development of barbed wire more?
- 4) The Open Range system of farming cattle would bring significant changes to the cowboys. Use the information below to organise into two columns in your books:

Cowboys before the Open Range

Cowboys after the Open Range

No longer needed to drive cattle for months along trails, they were now much nearer to their markets.

Slept in open air around camp fires.

Work was seasonal, from spring round up to the long drive in the autumn.

Dangers included stampeding cattle, wild animals, crossing rivers, rustlers, hostile Indians and extreme heat.

Work was year round and full time but fewer were needed.

In free time often visited saloons, brothels in cow towns.

Dangers were fewer but rustlers, Indian attacks and wild animals were still threats.

Drinking, gambling, guns and knives banned. Many struggled to adapt this.

Work involved rounding up, branding and driving cattle but over much shorter distances. Also checked ranch boundaries, made repairs etc.

Due to the extreme weather on the Plains, in winter cowboys would have to dig out snow bound cows, find them during blizzards, break ice at waterholes for them to drink etc.

On the biggest ranches cowboys would be sent out over the winter to stay in cabins or sod houses dotted around the perimeter. It was a cold and lonely life.

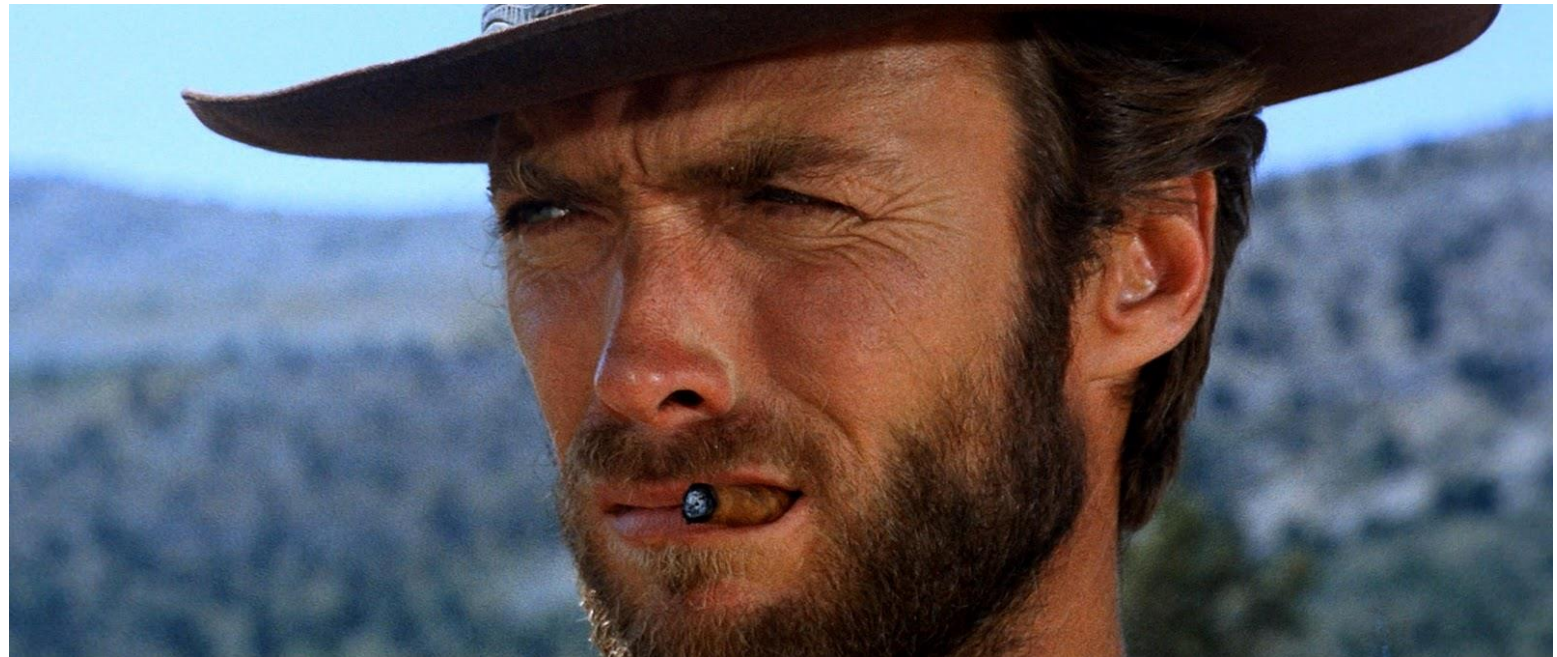
Work involved rounding up, branding and driving cattle hundreds of miles.

Slept in bunkhouses and used cookhouses.

Homework

- Complete the questions on the Cattle Industry Part 2 sheet and also the work on how the life of the cowboy changed once the open ranges came along
- Due in Weds 27th

1) Why do you think many cowboys struggled to adapt to these changes in their work and way of life? Explain your answer.



Summary of the Changes in the Cattle Industry by 1876 (end of unit 2)

1861: Civil War begins, disrupts cattle industry, herds breed and multiply rapidly.

1876: Cattle Industry Booming, investors rushing to back ranching, cattle barons very powerful.

1875: Refrigerated railroad cars developed – beef from ranches can be sent to even more distant markets.

1866: The Goodnight-Loving Trail established: sells beef to new markets in the West.



1870s: The peak time of Open Range Farming which began with **John Iliff** in 1867.

1867: McCoy sets up first **Cowtown – Abilene** on the railroad to send beef to populated areas in the East. Trails established to drive cattle there. Other cow towns follow.

1860s: Homesteaders moving onto Plains do not want cattle trails near them (fear of Texas fever).

Exam Question:

Write a narrative account analysing the ways in which the cattle industry changed in the years 1865 – 74.

You may use the following in your answer:

- The Civil War (1861- 1865)
- The Goodnight-Loving Trail (1866)
- You must also use information of your own. (8 marks)

Key phrases/words for a historical narrative to demonstrate links.

- therefore
- because of this...
- thus...
- in order to...
- as a consequence...
- hence...
- this led to...
- combined with...
- as a result...

Process words:

- began
- became
- developed
- changed
- realised
- ended
- intensified
 - grew
- followed
- worsened
- improved
- increased
- reinforced
- encouraged
- deteriorated
- despite

Step 2 - Decide which three events you want to include in your answer

You will need to write an organised answer, putting events into the correct chronological order (get revising those timelines!). You need to show how each event is connected to and led to the next event. You will need to explain THREE events in your narrative.

Analytical narratives are NOT stories. The analytical narrative, as well as linking events, also makes clear what followed on from them and what difference they made. The use of process words and phrases show that something was happening and therefore suggest the impact. Practice selecting key events, sequencing them and linking them into a process that explains an outcome.

Back to the Plains Indians...



How might all the changes and developments we have looked at in recent weeks from the 1860s and 1870s have had an a major impact on the Plains Indians?

(Think about
Homestead Act
Transcontinental Railway
Changes to Cattle Industry etc)