Plains Indians – Ways of life

- **Women:** responsible for the tipi, clothing, water and children.
- **Men:** responsible for hunting, horses and protection.
- **Older people:** advised younger leaders; told stories of their histories.
- **Chiefs:** e.g. Red Cloud and Sitting Bull; they were chosen for spiritual powers and wisdom; negotiated with the US government and led tribes into war e.g. Red Cloud's War (1866-68).
- **Nations:** e.g. Sioux Nation was a large group/collection of tribes.
- **Tribes:** e.g. Crow, Cheyenne, these were groups of bands/families who shared the same practices/beliefs.
- **Bands:** a group of a few families from a tribe who lived and moved together.
- **The horse:** used for hunting, transportation and war. They were a symbol of wealth and would be stolen between tribes.
- **The tipi:** a mobile shelter made from Buffalo skins; decorated to show victories in war/successes in hunting; scalps placed at the top as trophies.
- **Buffalo:** used for food e.g. tongue and muscle; fat for cooking; dung for fuel; hide (skin) for tipis; horns for cutlery and headdresses.

Plains Indians – Beliefs

- **The spirit world:** Wakan Tanka (the Great Spirit) created all life and all living things had a spirit including rocks, trees and streams. The spirit world could be contacted through dances and visions.
- **Land:** all life came from the land and would be returned to it; land could not be owned; the Black Hills were sacred.
- **War:** Raiding parties may attack/steal from other tribes 3-4 times a year; battles took place to control access to hunting; the Sioux and Cheyenne were rivals with the Crow and Pawnee tribes. Warriors proved their bravery by getting close to an enemy and touching them with a coup stick. Feathers were used to record success in battle.

Why did settlers migrate into the West?

- **Manifest destiny:** the belief that it was God's will for Christian Americans to occupy all of the land in America from coast to coast.
- **Oregon Trail:** Use by wagon trails from 1843, 3200km long and protected by the Fort Laramie Treaty after 1851.
- **Economy:** Fur trappers told stories about the lush grasslands of the West which attracted investment. A banking crisis in 1837 led to high unemployment, especially amongst Mississippi farmers and meant people had less reason to stay in the East as there was less wealth.
- **Government encouragement:** 1842 – Pre-Emption Act encouraged settlement as people could claim 160 acres of land and buy it for $1.25 after living there for 14 months.
- **Gold Rush (1848-9):** People moved from Europe, Asia and East America to California where the population increased from 15,000 to 250,000 by 1852.

Government policy towards the Natives

- **1830: Indian Removal Act:** 46,000 Indians moved to the west of the Mississippi = Trail of Tears due to deaths as they moved.
- **1834: Permanent Indian Frontier:** created a border to stop whites moving onto Indian land. Whites banned from selling alcohol/guns to Indians.
- **1842: Pre-emption Act** allowed settlers to claim 160 acres of land and buy it after living there for 14 months for $1.25 per acre.
- **1851:** (First) **Indian Appropriations Act:** Indians began to be placed on reservations.
- **1851: Fort Laramie Treaty:** Indians allowed settlers safe passage along the trails and were paid $50,000 a year; they were fined if settlers were attacked; Indians had territory protected from settlers. The government enforced fines on Indians but did not stop people using Indian land for travel. The document was not fully understood and not all tribes agreed e.g. Crow.
- **1862: Homestead Act** divided land into smaller areas for families to buy. $10 registration fee then $30 to buy it after 5 years. Anyone aged 21+ could claim land, even ex-slaves did. 6 million acres of land was sold. Only 16% of the land available was bought by 1884; wealthy people bought the land cheap to sell it for a profit.
- **1862: Pacific Railroad Act:** government paid $16,000 for every mile of track built; 45 million acres of land taken from Plains Indians to build the railroad; it led to increased migration from Europe e.g. Germany; it became much quicker to travel West, businesses e.g. in Texas could use it to trade quickly/easily; growth of cow towns e.g. Abilene to transport cattle to the north/east where the cattle were sold for higher value.
- **1868: President Grant's Peace Policy:** All Natives had to move onto reservations or they would be treated as hostile; Ely Parker was put in charge of the Bureau of Indian Affairs – taught children Western customs.
- **1871: Second Indian Appropriations Act:** Declared all previous deals between government and Natives were invalid, promised to protect existing Indian land and provide money/food to those on reservations; PIs given poor land that was difficult to farm.
- **1873: Timber Culture Act:** Homesteaders would be given an additional 160 acres for planting 40 acres of trees.
- **1887: Dawes General Allotment Act:** Native families could claim 160 acres of reservation land; only half did meaning the rest of the land was sold to settlers.

Who migrated West?

- **Donner Party:** Began on the Oregon Trail, reached Little Sandy River by June 1846. Used Hastings Cutoff to shorten the journey but lost 4 wagons, oxen and cattle. Trapped by snow in mountains for 4 months; only 46/87 survived.
- **Mormons:** They left Ohio after their bank collapsed in 1837; moved to Missouri but suffered persecution as they sympathised with Natives and were anti-slavery, they were attacked and forced to leave; went to Illinois where the population increased to 35,000, Joseph Smith announced polygamy and he would run for President which led to him being imprisoned then murdered by a gang. Brigham Young led them to the Great Salt Lake (outside the USA) were they settled. They setup the Perpetual Emigration Fund to pay for more Mormon converts to come to Utah. Utah was established as a state of the USA.
- **Gold miners:** Early miners used simple tools e.g. hammers and picks; mining companies paid for workers to travel from China; others came from other parts of America, Australia and Europe – mostly single men. Increase in saloons e.g. 500 in San Francisco by 1853.
- **Farmers:** Mostly white settlers from the east. The early settlers occupied land immediately to the West of the Appalachian Mountains where the fertile prairie lands were. They faced issues – limited water supply; claim-jumping; extreme weather e.g. no rain in Kansas from Jan.1859-Nov. 1860; limited wood for fuel/building; ploughing the land was difficult due to long roots of prairie grass; very hot summers led to wildfires destroying crops.