

Conflict on the Frontier

Lesson 1: The Search for Peace

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why does conflict develop?

Terms to Know

convene to gather for a meeting

corrupt dishonest or immoral

policy a set of actions planned or undertaken by government leaders to address an issue

pacifism the belief that it is wrong to use violence to settle conflicts

What do you know?

In the first column, answer the questions based on what you know before you study. After the lesson, fill in the last column.

Before	Questions	After
	What challenges did the U.S. Army face when trying to protect the frontier against attacks by Native Americans?	
	What was the Treaty of Medicine Lodge?	
	What is pacifism?	

Raids on the Frontier

Guiding Question *Why did the Medicine Lodge Creek Treaty fail to bring peace to West Texas?*

By 1861, most Native Americans had been removed from East Texas. Native Americans in West Texas, however, were determined to keep settlers out. During the Civil War, federal troops were pulled out of Texas to fight in the East. As a result, Comanche, Kiowa, and other Plains peoples often attacked settlements. Many pioneers were forced to abandon their homes and move to safer areas of the state.



Identifying Cause and Effect

- Why did Native American raids in West Texas increase during the Civil War?

Conflict on the Frontier

Lesson 1: The Search for Peace, *continued*



Organizing

2. Why were the Native American raids difficult for the U.S. Army to stop?



Defining

3. What does *convene* mean?



Marking the Text

4. Highlight the conditions to which some Native Americans agreed in the Medicine Lodge Creek treaties.



Reading Progress Check

5. What was the purpose of the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek?

After the Civil War, the U.S. Army returned to Texas. Still, the Native American raids in West Texas proved difficult to stop. Too few troops were posted at forts in West Texas, and the forts were far apart. For example, Fort Griffin and Fort Concho were about 140 miles apart. It could take cavalry units several days to travel from one to the other.

A shortage of supplies was another problem for the U.S. troops. Sometimes the Army had to call off its plans to fight Native Americans because it did not have enough food or horses. Also, army officers knew how to fight in traditional wars, but they knew little about frontier warfare. Native Americans knew how to strike quickly and disappear.

For a while, Native Americans also had an advantage in weaponry. Soldiers had muzzle-loading guns that needed 20 seconds or more to reload. Native Americans could shoot several arrows in that time. During the 1870s and 1880s, U.S. troops began using repeating rifles, which fired more quickly. However, Native Americans obtained these weapons, too.

In 1867 the U.S. government decided to make a treaty with Native Americans. Officials met with Native Americans near Medicine Lodge Creek in Kansas. Five Native American groups came to the meeting. As a gesture of peace, the U.S. government provided food for all Native Americans who **convened**, or gathered to meet, at the peace conference.

The government signed three treaties at Medicine Lodge Creek. One was with the Kiowa and Comanche, another was with the Plains Apache, and a third was with the Arapaho and Cheyenne. Under the treaties, the Native Americans agreed to:

- stop fighting the building of railroads across the Plains
- give up any claim to the Plains
- move to reservations in the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma)

In return, Native Americans would receive large amounts of land for the reservations, plentiful and continuing supplies, and promises that no settlers or soldiers would enter the reservations. The government promised to punish any who did.

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Many Native American leaders refused to sign. The army captain who recorded the speeches did not believe that the Native Americans understood everything in the treaties they signed. He predicted that there would be another war soon.

Failed Attempts at Peace

Guiding Question *Why did the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek and following attempts at peace fail?*

Armed conflicts did continue across the Plains. The Treaty of Medicine Lodge failed because neither side was fully committed to its terms. Also, the reservation system had problems. The reservations were supposed to be controlled by Native Americans. However, federal agents actually controlled reservations. Many of these agents were **corrupt**. Agents were supposed to deliver money, food, and other supplies to Native Americans, but they often stole or sold the goods.

President Ulysses S. Grant recognized the problems with the reservations. He took several steps to implement a new **policy**. At first, he tried to remove corrupt federal agents and put the U.S. Army in control of the reservations. When Congress blocked this action, Grant put church groups in charge of the reservations. Many new agents belonged to the Society of Friends, or the Quakers. Quakers believe in **pacifism**, or nonviolence.

In 1869 Grant appointed Lawrie Tatum, a Quaker, as the federal agent in Indian Territory for the Kiowa and Comanche people. Tatum planned to teach these groups how to farm so they would not have to hunt as much.

Not all Native American leaders signed the Medicine Lodge Creek Treaty. That weakened it. There were several different bands of Kiowa people. Lone Wolf was the leader of one of these bands. Because he had not signed the treaty, the members of his band refused to follow it.

Quanah Parker was one of several Comanche chiefs who opposed the treaty and refused to move onto a reservation. He was the son of a Comanche chief and an Anglo American woman, Cynthia Ann Parker, who had been captured as a child. For several years after the treaty was signed, he led a band of Comanche fighters who resisted Anglo American settlement of the Plains.



Finding the Main Idea

6. Why did the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek fail?



Defining

7. What does *pacifism* mean?



Marking the Text

8. Circle the information that tells who Quanah Parker was.



Explaining

9. Why did Satanta sign the treaty, and what did he think would be the outcome for his people?

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Marking the Text

10. Highlight the text about Kicking Bird's thoughts on the treaty.



Reading Progress Check

11. Why did some Native Americans refuse to support the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek?

Some leaders signed the treaty but did not have much hope. Satanta was a Kiowa chief. He did not think his people could resist the army, but he was also clear about his people's future. He believed that settling down would kill his people. Satanta signed the treaty but did not stay on the reservation. He became another Native American leader who fought against westward expansion.

Some Native American leaders signed and supported the treaty. Kicking Bird, for example, believed that the Kiowa should move to a reservation and accept Anglo ways. Other leaders led their groups to reservations for the promised supplies.

In the end, neither side lived up to the terms of the Medicine Lodge Treaty. Bands of Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache continued to roam the Plains, trying to live as they always had. Soon they began to raid settlements that were not protected by forts.

The U.S. government did not stop soldiers from entering the reservations or punish those who stole Native American goods or sold liquor on the reservations. Due to disagreements in Congress, the supplies promised for the reservations were not delivered on time. Food shortages led to hunger and disease among the Native Americans on the reservations. The shaky peace soon gave way to conflict.

Writing

Check for Understanding

1. **Expository** What were the early problems with the reservation system?

2. **Expository** How did the U.S. government fail to live up to its treaty agreements?
