

Conflict on the Frontier

Lesson 3: Buffalo Soldiers and Outlaws

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why does conflict develop?

Terms to Know

segregated separated based on membership in a racial or ethnic group

buffalo soldier an African American soldier serving in the western United States after the Civil War

deserter a person who illegally leaves the armed forces while still required to serve

renegade a person who rejects lawful behavior

commit to carry out

confine to limit or restrict the movement of

What do you know?

For each statement, write a *T* for true or an *F* for false. When you finish the lesson, recheck your answers and correct any that are wrong.

- _____ African American soldiers earned the nickname *buffalo soldiers* because they were great hunters of buffalo.
- _____ Apache leader Victorio was finally captured by U.S. troops.
- _____ Increased patrols by Texas Rangers helped bring greater calm to the border region.
- _____ Between 1870 and 1890, most Native Americans were gone from Texas or on reservations.
- _____ The spread of railroads helped increase settlement in Texas.

Buffalo Soldiers Fight the Last Battles

Guiding Question *What part did African Americans play in ending the wars against Native Americans in Texas?*

When General Sherman toured Texas in 1871, about 20 soldiers went with him. Seventeen were African Americans from the Tenth Cavalry. These 17 were among the many African American soldiers sent to Texas.

During the Civil War, about 180,000 African Americans fought in **segregated** units for the Union Army. These soldiers had shown great combat skill. Therefore, Congress formed African American regiments after the war to serve in the West. Native Americans called them “**buffalo soldiers**” out of respect for their fighting ability.



Marking the Text

1. Highlight the text that explains the source of the nickname *buffalo soldier*.

Conflict on the Frontier

Lesson 3: Buffalo Soldiers and Outlaws, *continued*

Listing

2. What tasks did buffalo soldiers do while serving in Texas?

Identifying

3. Who was Victorio?

Reading Progress Check

4. What challenges did the buffalo soldiers face in Texas?

Defining

5. What does *renegade* mean?

Buffalo soldiers in Texas found themselves in a former slaveholding state. As a result, they sometimes faced unfair treatment from settlers. Sometimes, these conflicts with white settlers turned violent. The buffalo soldiers were not always treated fairly by the army, either. With a few exceptions, they served under white officers. Often, the buffalo soldiers were given poor quality horses and supplies.

In spite of these difficulties, the buffalo soldiers served well. They had many duties, including patrolling the frontier and building roads and forts. Buffalo soldiers fought in nearly every battle in West Texas and along the Rio Grande and were known for their fighting skills. Thirteen enlisted men and six officers were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their conduct in the wars with Native Americans.

One of the last campaigns involving buffalo soldiers was against an Apache leader named Victorio. In 1877 the terrible conditions on an Arizona reservation caused Victorio to begin raiding along the Rio Grande. The raids occurred in both the United States and Mexico. Buffalo soldiers commanded by Colonel Benjamin Grierson and Colonel Edward Hatch had the job of locating and defeating Victorio's band.

In early 1880, Grierson led his men on a 1,500-mile (2,414-km) march in search of Victorio. They eventually located the Apache fighters near the Guadalupe Mountains. The two sides fought a three-hour battle before the Native Americans fled to Mexico. Finally, Mexican soldiers found and trapped Victorio. They killed him and all his men in October 1880.

Outlaws Along the Rio Grande

Guiding Question *How was peace established along the Rio Grande in the 1870s?*

Bands of Native Americans were not the only danger threatening Texas settlers in the 1870s. The area near the Rio Grande did not have strong law enforcement. Outlaws wandered the countryside, especially along the Rio Grande. Civil War army **deserters** often roamed the area. **Renegades**, or people who reject lawful behavior, carried out robberies and other crimes. Some cattle ranchers took land and cattle from poor Texans and Mexican Americans.

In 1874, the Texas state government sent Texas Rangers to the Rio Grande area to fight the outlaws. While they were there, the Rangers carried out their work forcefully and sometimes cruelly.

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In Brownsville one of the Rangers was killed. After that killing, a group of Rangers commanded by Captain L. H. McNelly dumped the bodies of 12 cattle rustlers in the town square. It was a warning to other outlaws.

In 1875 some Rangers illegally crossed into Mexico to retrieve stolen cattle. There they fought Mexican citizens and soldiers. Some historians believe that the Rangers **committed** many illegal acts, especially against Mexican Americans.

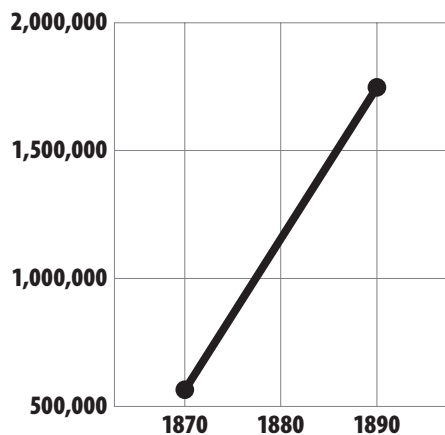
One man who often clashed with the law was Juan Cortina. Cortina was a Mexican who led a band that tried to protect the rights of Mexicans and Tejanos along the border. Many families in the area saw Cortina as a hero. The Rangers believed he regularly stole cattle in Texas and took them to Mexico. Pressure from the U.S. government forced the Mexican government to arrest Cortina in 1875. Gradually, with more patrols by the Rangers and the Mexican army, the border area became more peaceful.

Changes in the West

Guiding Question *How did West Texas change for settlers and Native Americans during the late 1800s?*

In the late 1800s, the West Texas wars and the ever-increasing number of settlers from the east caused great changes in Texas. The number of white settlers tripled in the two decades between 1870 and 1890.

White Settlers in Texas



Marking the Text

6. Highlight the action of Rangers in Brownsville.

Identifying

7. Why did some people see Cortina as a hero?

Reading Progress Check

8. Summarize the lawlessness along the Rio Grande in the late 1800s.

Analyzing

9. Study the graph on the left. How many white settlers lived in West Texas in 1890?

Conflict on the Frontier**Lesson 3: Buffalo Soldiers and Outlaws, *continued*****Marking the Text**

10. Circle the names of the three reservations in Texas.

**Reading Progress Check**

11. Describe the effect of the growth of railroads on West Texas.

During the same period of time, the Native American population decreased dramatically. Nearly all the remaining Native Americans were **confined** to reservations outside of Texas. The only reservation in Texas was the Alabama-Coushatta Reservation northeast of Houston. In the 1900s, the Tigua Reservation in El Paso County and the Kickapoo Reservation southeast of Eagle Pass were established in Texas.

Between 1873 and 1891, railroad lines in Texas increased tremendously. They went from a total length of about 1,000 miles to 9,000 miles (1,609 km to 14,484 km). The new railroads made it easier for more settlers to reach West Texas.

By the 1890s, the look of Texas had changed forever. Many new cities, such as Wichita Falls, Vernon, Sweetwater, and Abilene, were founded across the Texas Plains. Native Americans were seen rarely anymore.

Writing**Check for Understanding**

1. **Expository** What was the result of the battle between the buffalo soldiers and Victorio?

2. **Expository** What was a main role of the Texas Rangers in the 1870s?
