

Summary: People of the Midwest

The Midwest's First People

American Indians have lived in the Midwest for centuries. Each Indian nation has its own culture. Woodland Indians farmed and built houses with wood frames. Plains Indians followed and hunted the buffalo herds on the Great Plains. Spanish explorers brought the first horses to North America. Soon Plains Indians were using horses to hunt and travel.

Indians traded furs with Europeans for metal tools. Europeans took land to settle. England and France went to war for control of the Ohio Valley. Pontiac, leader of the Ottawa, fought against the English. In 1763 the British defeated the French. The Ottawa were defeated two years later. About 4,700 Ottawa still live in the area.

Early Settlers

The United States took control of the Northwest Territory in 1783. In 1803, Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana Territory from France. Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark to explore the region.

Congress passed the Homestead Act of 1862. It gave land to anyone who would settle and stay for five years. Settlers and immigrants from the east came to farm. The government gave land to soldiers. Life was often hard. There were not enough trees to build wooden houses. People built houses of sod. The Indians were pushed from their land. Most were forced to live on reservations.

Midwestern Cities

Midwestern cities grew because of industry and transportation routes. In the late 1800s, many people moved from farms to cities to find factory jobs. Factories used the assembly line to make goods cheaply and quickly.

After World War I, many African Americans moved to the Midwest to get factory work. St. Louis and Minneapolis grew because they were close to natural resources and the Mississippi River. The river provided power for mills. These cities became manufacturing and food processing centers.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

homestead *noun*, a piece of land given to someone to settle and farm there

reservation *noun*, land set aside by the government for American Indians

assembly line *noun*, a way of manufacturing goods where each worker does one small part of the job

After You Read

REVIEW How did horses change the lives of the Plains Indians long ago? Circle the sentence that tells you the answer.

REVIEW What were two reasons that the United States grew? Highlight the sentences that tell how the United States got more land.

REVIEW Why did midwestern cities grow? Underline the sentence that tells you the answer.