

Section

3

The Red River War

Main Ideas

1. The attack on Adobe Walls led to war between the Plains Indians and the U.S. government.
2. The Battle of Palo Duro Canyon marked the end of the era of American Indian control over the Texas Plains.

Why It Matters Today

American Indians and U.S. Army soldiers fought in many regions of Texas. Use current events sources to learn about the U.S. Army today.

Key Terms

- Battle of Adobe Walls
- Battle of Palo Duro Canyon

The Story Continues

The summer sun had not yet risen. Arapahos, Cheyennes, Comanches, and Kiowas waited in the dark. In the distance stood Adobe Walls, a trading post that served buffalo hunters on the Texas plains. Isatai, a powerful medicine man, promised that “those white men can’t shoot you. . . . I will stop all their guns.” With that, the Indians rode at full speed toward the settlement.

★ The Battle of Adobe Walls

By the spring of 1874, the situation had become desperate for Plains Indians. They were starving on the reservations, and the buffalo were being slaughtered by white hunters. Little Robe, a Cheyenne, reminded reservation agents of the importance of the buffalo.

TEXAS VOICES

“Your people make big talk and sometimes make war, if an Indian kills a white man’s ox to keep his wife and children from starving; what do you think my people ought to say when they see their [buffalo] killed by your race?”

—Little Robe, quoted in *The Buffalo War*, by James L. Haley

Isatai called for a war to drive out the buffalo hunters. In response, several Plains Indians leaders met in June 1874. Quanah Parker led the Comanches, and Lone Wolf led the Kiowas. Encouraged by Isatai, they targeted the trading post at Adobe Walls in the Texas Panhandle.

On June 27 about 700 Indians attacked Adobe Walls. Only 28 men and one woman were at the trading post, but they had an important advantage—buffalo guns. These powerful weapons could shoot long



TEKS: 1B, 6A, 9A, 9C, 20A, 21A, 21B, 21C, 21D, 22A, 22D

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on the effects of Red River War.



VIDEO

Quanah Parker:
The Last
Comanche

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Quanah Parker, last chief of the Comanches, fought hard to protect his people's land. However, within a year after the defeat at Adobe Walls, Parker and the Comanches were forced onto a Kiowa-Comanche reservation in southwestern Oklahoma.

distances. Despite repeated attacks, the hunters held their ground at the **Battle of Adobe Walls**. Four defenders died in the battle, while Indian casualties are estimated at 12 to 30. Although the attack failed, Plains Indians remained determined to protect their hunting grounds. They began a widespread war against buffalo hunters and settlers, launching attacks in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Reading Check Sequencing Explain in order the events leading to American Indian attacks on the Texas frontier.



The Battle of Palo Duro Canyon

After the attack at Adobe Walls and other American Indian raids, U.S. officials ordered General William Tecumseh Sherman to attack raiding Indians “wherever found. . . . The Reservation lines should be no barrier.” Generals Sherman and Philip Sheridan organized a military campaign to kill or remove remaining American Indians in the Panhandle.

In August 1874 the army began a major offensive known as the Red River War. Some 3,000 troops in five different groups headed toward the Indian villages along the upper parts of the Red River. They were joined by the Frontier Battalion of the Texas Rangers, commanded by Major John D. Jones. Colonel Nelson Miles led a force of 750 soldiers into Texas from Fort Dodge in Kansas. These soldiers fought continuously against some 600 Cheyenne, who finally escaped in late August.

Major William Price led troops eastward from Fort Union in New Mexico Territory. Price defeated a band of Indians near Sweetwater Creek in the eastern Panhandle. Meanwhile, Colonel John Davidson and Lieutenant Colonel George Buell commanded two other military forces

patrolling the region. Both forces destroyed many American Indian villages. The soldiers forced hundreds of Indians, mainly women and children, onto reservations, where supplies were already short.

Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie struck the final blow to the Texas Plains Indians. In August, Mackenzie's forces marched north from Fort Concho. Mackenzie learned that many Comanches, Kiowas, and a few Cheyennes were camping in Palo Duro Canyon, which had provided safe shelter to Indian families for centuries.

Just before dawn on September 28, 1874, Mackenzie and about 500 troops quietly worked their way down into the canyon. The soldiers surprised the Indian villages and killed three Comanches. Panic-stricken, women and children fled out onto the plains. The **Battle of Palo Duro Canyon** took a terrible toll on the Comanches. In their haste to escape, the Comanches left behind most of their supplies—including more than 1,400 horses. Mackenzie had most of the horses shot to prevent the Comanches from recapturing them. He also ordered his men to burn the villages in the canyon. Lacking clothing and horses, few Indians could hope to survive the winter in the Panhandle. They had no choice but to move to the reservations in Indian Territory.

The battle marked a turning point in the Red River War. The era of American Indian control of the Texas Plains had come to an end. Indian leaders advised the Cheyennes to accept reservation life.

TEXAS VOICES

"... we want them to travel in the white man's road. The white men are as many as the leaves on the trees and we are only a few people, and we should do as the white man wants us to, and live at peace with him."

—Grey Beard and Minimic, quoted in *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains*,
by William H. Leckie

Analyzing Primary Sources

Drawing Inferences and Conclusions Why did Grey Beard and Minimic advise the Cheyennes to adopt the ways of white Americans?

Reading Check Identifying Cause and Effect What was the outcome of the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon, and how did it affect Texas Plains Indians?



Section 3 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

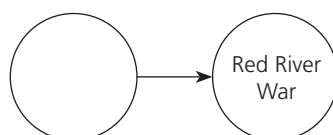
1. Identify and explain

the historical significance of:

- Battle of Adobe Walls
- Battle of Palo Duro Canyon

2. Identifying Cause and Effect

- Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to explain the main events of the early 1870s and how they led to the Red River War.



3. Finding the Main Idea

- a. How did the Battle of Adobe Walls affect Plains Indians on the frontier?
- b. How did Mackenzie and his troops win the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon?

4. Writing and Critical Thinking

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Drawing Inferences and Conclusions Write a short report explaining why some Plains Indians groups in Texas believed it was necessary to attack the buffalo hunters and settlers.

Consider the following:

- life on the reservations
- the effect of hunters on the buffalo