

COWS, TRAINS, & CONSEQUENCES

DRIVING CHANGE ACROSS TEXAS LANDS
4TH GRADE

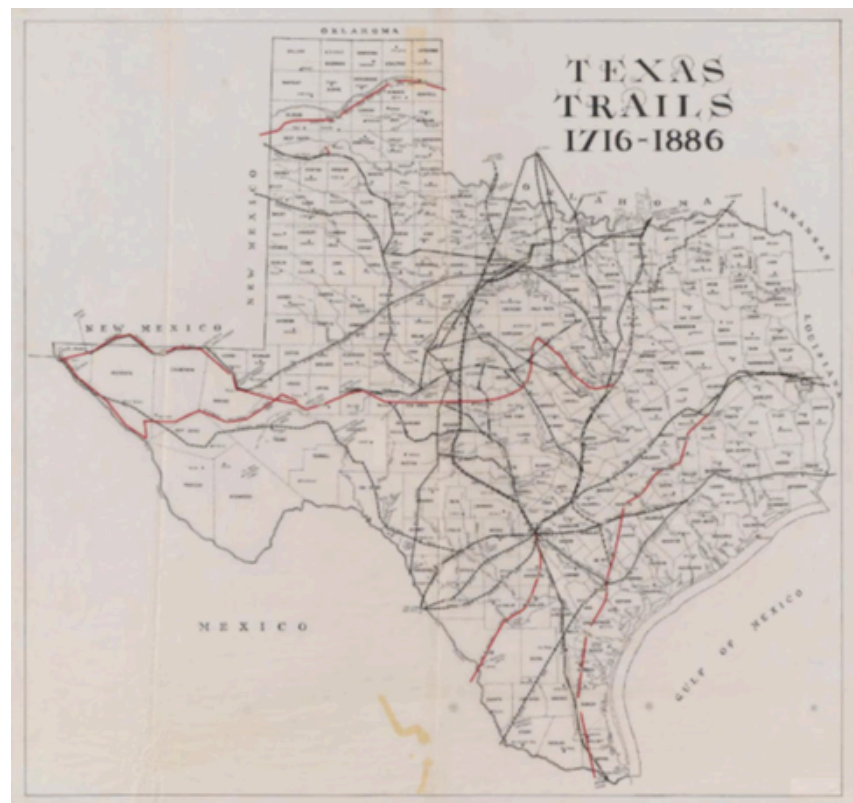


Click the mic icon for the “Topic Deep Dive” Podcast for this unit! (5 min.)

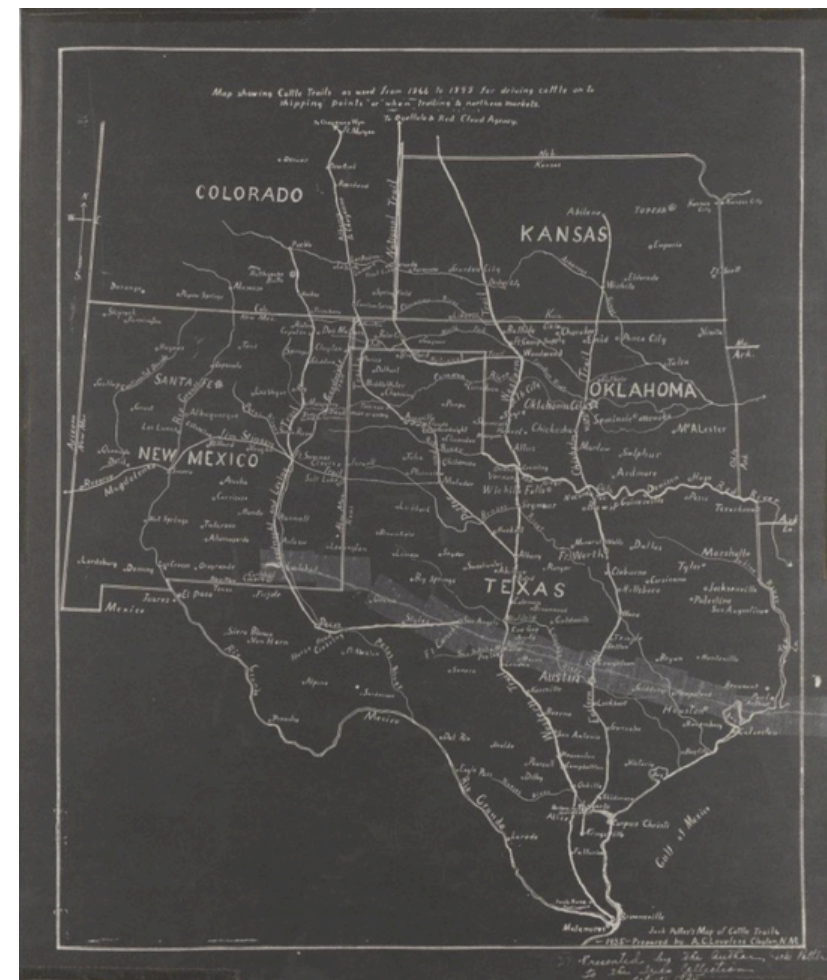
BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, I WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Explain how the cattle and railroad industries developed in Texas and impacted settlement.
- Identify contributions by Charles Goodnight, Richard King, and Lizzie Johnson.
- Consider how forts and buffalo loss affected Native life.
- Use Google Maps to show cattle trails, railroad routes, and impacted Native regions.
- Collaborate to simulate the challenges of herding cattle and settling new lands.

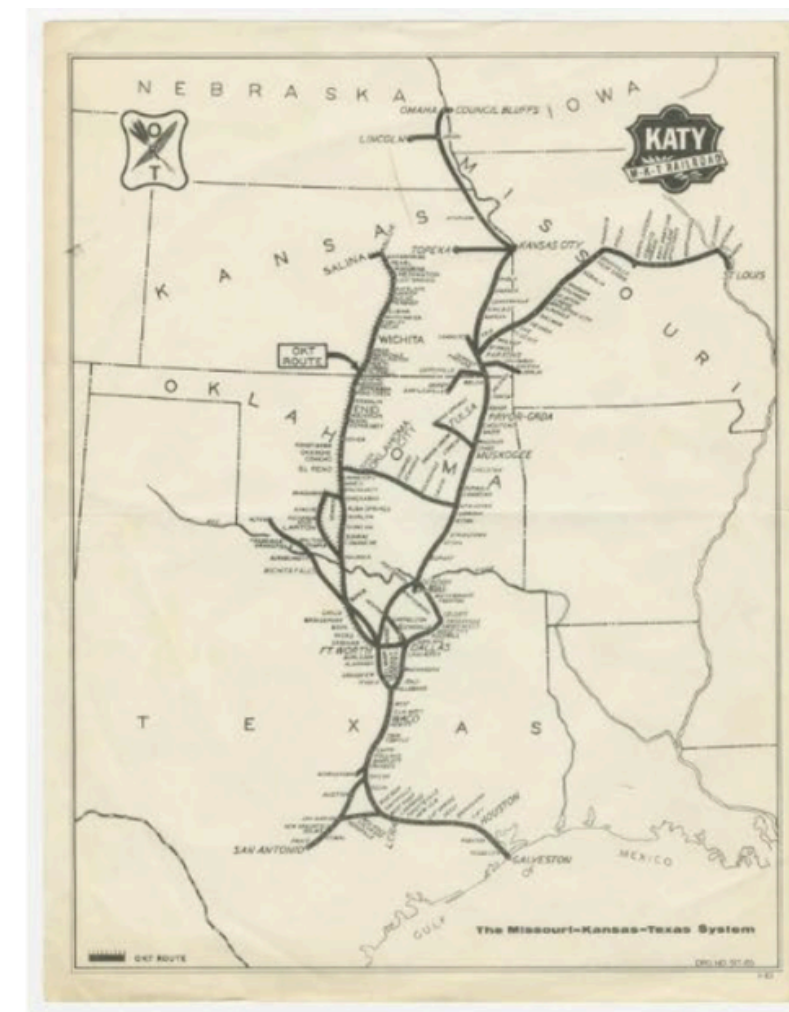




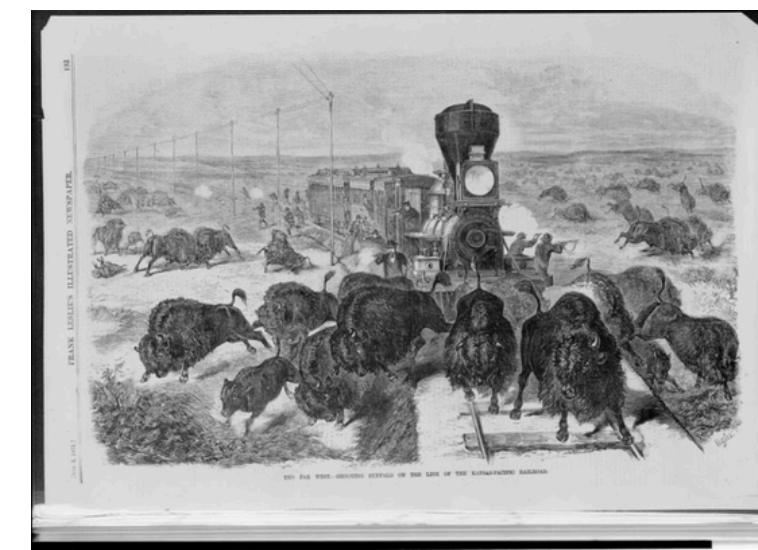
Texas Trails: 1716-1886



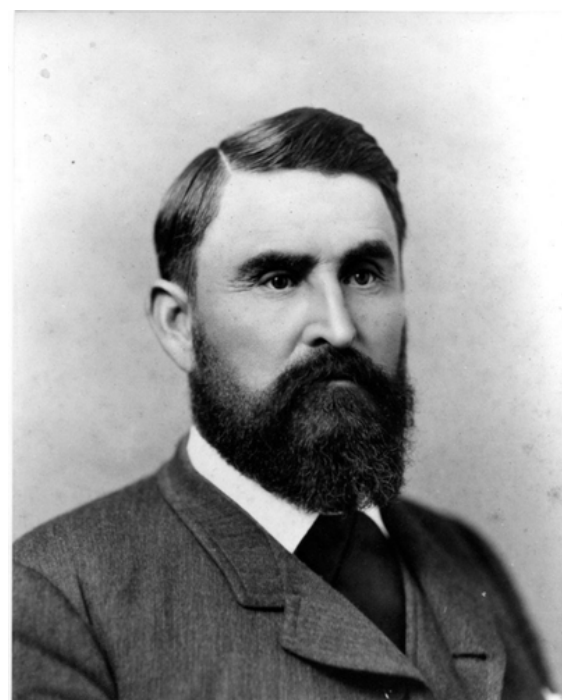
Cattle Trails from 1866 to 1895



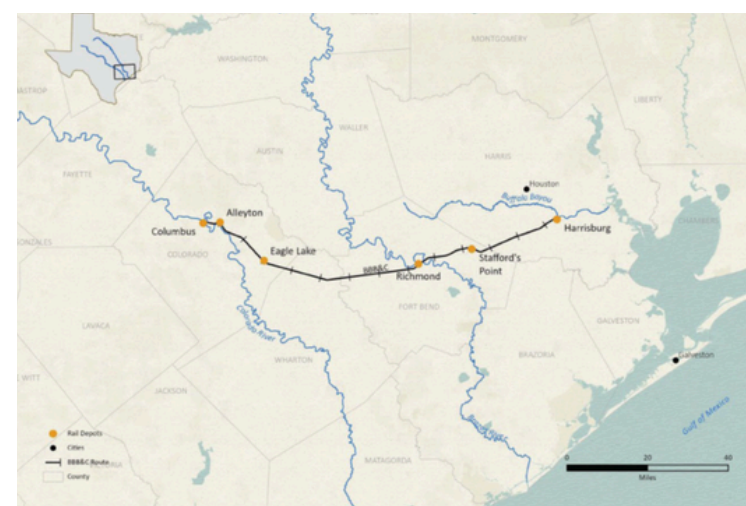
Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad



The Far West

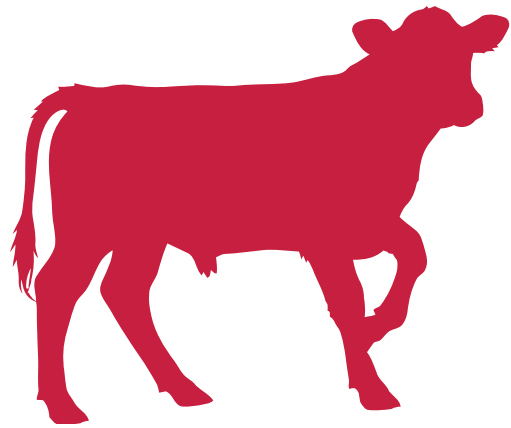


Charles Goodnight



The Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railroad

VOCABULARY WORDS



Cattle Drive (n)
The process of moving cattle from ranches to railroads or markets.



Trail (n)
A track made by passage especially through a wilderness.



Industry (n)
A distinct group of productive or profit-making enterprises.



Displace (v)
To remove from the usual or proper place.



Settlement (n)
A new community started in a new area.



Ranch (n)
A large farm for raising horses, beef cattle, or sheep.

INTRODUCTION

The sun is rising over the wide Texas plains, casting a golden glow across miles of open land. The ground rumbles beneath your boots as a massive herd of cattle moves slowly forward, stretching farther than you can see. You wipe the dust from your face and grip the reins a little tighter. You've got a long journey ahead. There are rivers to cross, storms to survive, and moments where one wrong decision could change everything.

Days pass, and just when you think you understand the land and the trail, something unexpected appears on the horizon, and something powerful that's changing Texas forever. It's faster than a herd, louder than a storm, and it doesn't stop for anything.

Now you have a choice to make: how will you face what comes next... and will you make it to the end?



RANCHERS AND NATIVE AMERICANS REFLECTION

SCALE	RANCHERS	NATIVE AMERICANS
POSITIVE		
NEUTRAL		
NEGATIVE		

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. How did this group benefit from cattle drives and railroads?
2. What were some of the negative impacts on them?
3. Include at least 2 examples in each box.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

After completing the chart:

- How did railroads change life for settlers?
- How were Native Americans affected?
- Can something help one group but hurt another?



TIP

Start your sentence this way:
“___ benefited because ___.” or “___ was
harmed because ___.”

“BUILD THE RAILROAD... OR NOT?”

In the late 1800s, people in Texas wanted to build railroads to move cattle faster and make money. Ranchers (like Charles Goodnight) thought it would help them. But Native American groups lived on that land and depended on buffalo. After events like the Red River War, their land and way of life were already changing.

Should people build a railroad through this part of Texas?



“BUILD THE RAILROAD... OR NOT?” - ROLES

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
RANCHER	A person who raises cattle on a ranch and wants to sell them for money (like Charles Goodnight).
RAILROAD BUILDER	A person who builds train tracks to help move people and goods across Texas.
SETTLER	A person who moves to a new place to build a home and start a life there.
NATIVE AMERICAN	A person from the first groups who lived on the land before settlers arrived and depended on the land for survival.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

With your group, answer the following:

- What do we want?
 - (Example: money, land, safety, food)
- How would the railroad help us?
- How could the railroad hurt us?
- Our decision:
 - Build
 - Do not build
- Why? (write 1-2 sentences)



TIP

Start your sentence this way:

“We are ____, and we think the railroad should / should not be built because ____.”

WRAP-UP WRITING (EXIT TICKET)

Select ONE of the following questions to answer:

- One group that benefited was _____ because _____.
- One group that was harmed was _____ because _____.



TIP

- For this ticket, you can:
 - Draw + label instead of writing full sentences.
 - Use verbal responses instead of written ones.

EXIT TICKET (WRITING)

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. One group that benefited was ____ because ____.
2. One group that was harmed was ____ because ____.

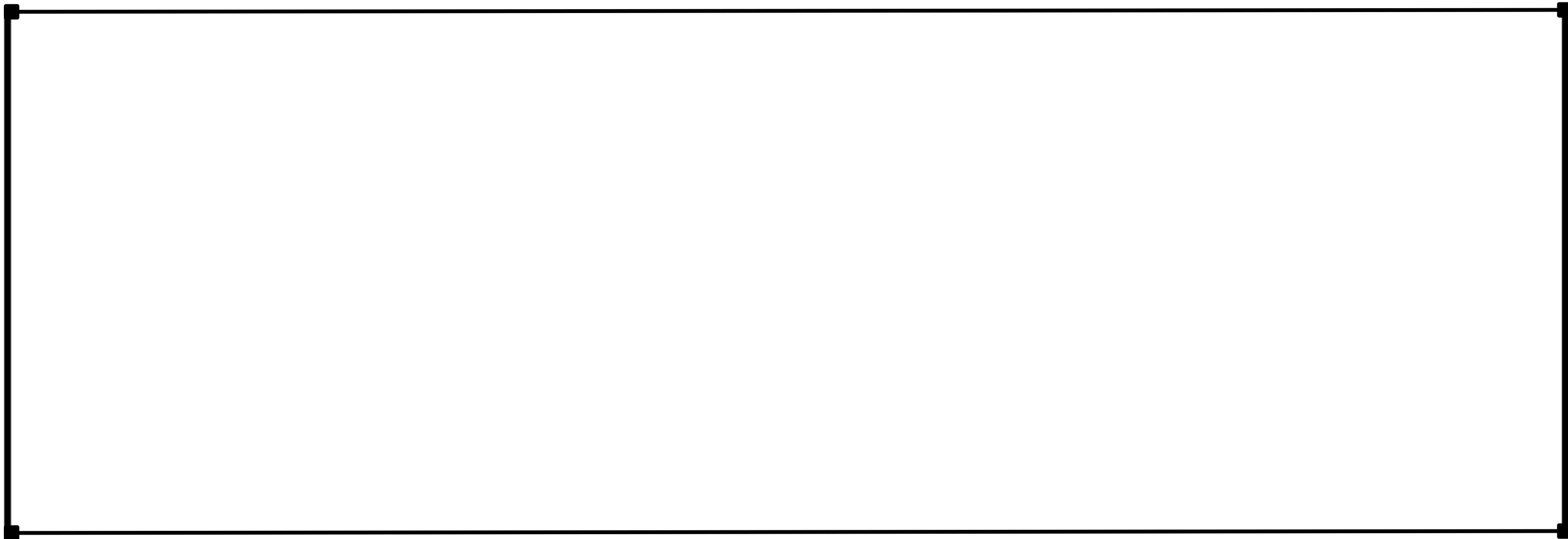
TIP Start your sentence this way:
“When I first saw the explorer, I felt ____ because ____.”

EXIT TICKET (DRAWING)

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. One group that benefited was ____ because ____.
2. One group that was harmed was ____ because ____.



Draw
Here

STATE HISTORIC SITE CONNECTION

Goodnight Ranch (1876)

Imagine standing on the rugged plains of the Texas Panhandle, where vast cattle herds and bison once roamed. This is the Charles and Mary Ann Goodnight Ranch, home to one of Texas' most influential ranching families. Here, Charles Goodnight helped shape the West by creating the chuckwagon, leading cattle drives, and co-founding the JA Ranch. His wife, Mary Ann, was an educator and conservationist who worked to save the Southern Plains bison.

Together, they built a successful ranch and supported their community, even opening a college. Tour the restored home, see descendants of the Goodnight bison herd, and imagine life on the Texas frontier.



 [Explore Goodnight Ranch](#)

THANK YOU!



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