

Grade Level: 7th Grade

Topic: Cattle Trails

Essential Question:

How was the image of The West influenced by cowboys and cattle drives?

Resources:

- A. Excerpt from Kansapedia: Cowtowns; Kansas State Historical Society.
- B. 2 images: The Chisholm Trail and Loading Cattle. Read Kansas: Kansas State Historical Society.
- C. Map of the Chisholm Trail. Google images.

Writing Types	Guiding Questions	Prompts	Reminders/Things to Consider (Student-Friendly Rubric Descriptors)
Informative/ Explanatory	How is the image of the West supported by the establishment of cowtowns along the trails? How did the life of cattle trail cowboys impact the image of the West?	Write an article describing the image of The West, explaining how cowtowns, cowboys, the cattle trails, and life of the time period portrayed and supported that image of The West.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State a clear controlling idea that addresses resources and the prompt.• Use relevant details from at least two of the sources to explain the controlling idea.• Clarify relationships among ideas and those that explain the controlling idea.• Apply conventions correctly.
Narrative	What was life like for a cowboy riding the cattle trails? What was life like in the towns along the cattle trails?	You are a cowhand working with others along the Chisholm Trail. Write a letter home telling your family what your work is like. Include details about where you are, the cattle in the herd, and descriptions of life along the trail and in the town or towns where you stay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a setting and a narrator/characters.• Use description and/or dialogue to develop situations or characters.• Use appropriate phrases and words to signal order of events.• Make sure you include an introduction and a conclusion that are appropriate.• Apply conventions correctly.

Resource 1 Excerpt from Kansapedia: Cowtowns

Cowtowns



After the Civil War there was an acute shortage of beef in the northern states. Texas ranchers were burdened with five million head of cattle and no railroads on which to ship them to market. Realizing the immense profit to be made, Texas cattlemen looked for the nearest rail heads. Thus began the era of the long cattle drive and Kansas cowtowns.

From 1866 to 1885 hundreds of thousands of Texas longhorns were driven annually to shipping points in Kansas. Abilene, Ellsworth, Wichita, Dodge City, and Caldwell received the major portion of the booming cattle trade. Baxter Springs, Newton, Hunnewell, Great Bend, Hays, and Junction City achieved periods of brief success.

The [Chisholm Trail](#) served as the major trail to many of the Kansas cowtowns. After years of use, it was described as being 200 to 400 yards wide and as bare as a city street. As quarantine laws and homesteaders' fences closed off more and more towns to Texas drovers, Dodge City emerged as the principal Kansas cowtown. From 1875 to 1885 Texas cattle followed the cutoff on the Chisholm Trail or the Western Trail to the "Cowboy Capital."



In 1867 Joseph G. McCoy, a young cattle dealer from Illinois, decided Abilene would make a good rail head...Abilene received about 35,000 head of cattle that first year. The arrival of the Union Pacific, Eastern Division Railroad, known as the Kansas Pacific in 1869, connected Abilene to the east. Under McCoy's leadership, Abilene reigned as the primary market for Texas cattle for four years.

Although many people profited from the cattle business, not all Kansans approved of it. The longhorns carried a tick that spread Texas fever among local cattle. Farmers lobbied the Kansas legislature to enact quarantine laws to keep the Texas cattle out of their area. By choosing Abilene, McCoy had actually violated the 1867 quarantine law which only permitted Texas cattle in the area south and west of present McPherson. The town was so sparsely populated, however, and the potential profits so great that no one objected...

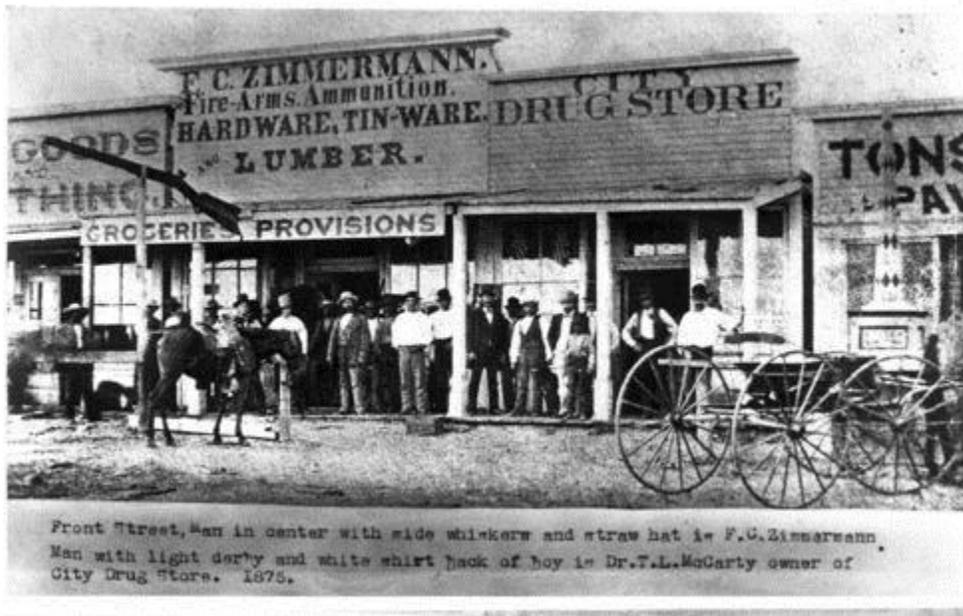
In 1871, the last big year for Abilene, more than 40,000 head of cattle were shipped out by rail. Increased settlement and community disapproval of the cowtown lifestyle forced the cattle market to move west to Newton and Ellsworth.

In 1871, Newton experienced its only major cattle season. It was described that year as probably the roughest town in the West with 27 saloons, eight gambling halls, and a boot hill.

The businessmen of Ellsworth anticipated the shift in the cattle trade from Abilene to their town. In 1872, the Drovers Cottage, once owned by Joseph McCoy, was moved to Ellsworth. It could accommodate 175 guests and the stable held 50 carriages and 100 horses. Ellsworth would dominate the market from 1871 - 1875, while receiving stiff competition from Wichita...

In the 1873 season, more than 150,000 cattle were trailed to Ellsworth. Over 30,000 were shipped out by rail while most of the others were sold to stock western ranges.

In 1872, the Wichita and South Western Rail Road line reached Wichita. It provided the necessary link with the Santa Fe Railroad trunk line, which would carry cattle to eastern markets. The following year 66,000 head of cattle were shipped out of Wichita, twice as many as from Ellsworth.



When quarantine laws closed Wichita to the cattle trade, Dodge City emerged as the "Queen of the Cowtowns." From 1875 - 1885, more than 75,000 head of cattle were shipped annually. Many thousands more were driven through Dodge to stock northern ranges or to be shipped from other railheads.

Caldwell challenged Dodge City for the cattle market in the 1880s. Although it was within the quarantined area, it was so near the border that it was able to conduct business without any problems. Known as "the Border Queen," nearly 100,000 head of Texas longhorns were shipped out on the Santa Fe line in 1882 and 1883.

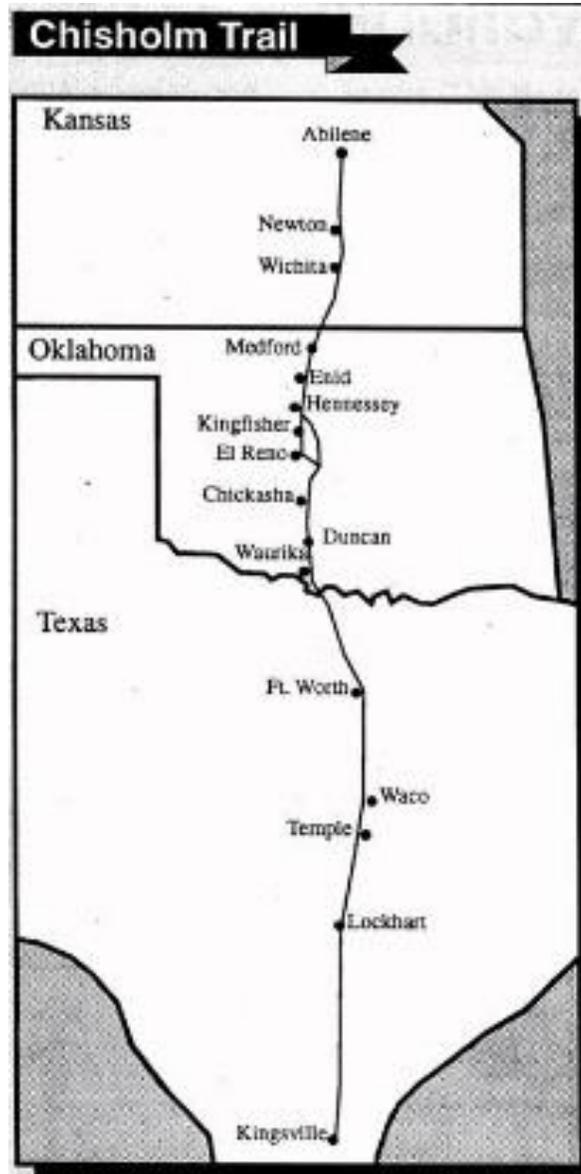


In the 1880s, Hunnewell flourished briefly as a shipping point for Texas cattle. Located on the Kansas-Oklahoma border in Sumner County, the Leavenworth, Lawrence and Galveston Railroad provided quick access to the Kansas City stockyards. Typical of cowtowns, the business district of Hunnewell reportedly consisted of one hotel, two stores, one barbershop, a couple of dance halls, and eight or nine saloons.

By the mid-1880s, many events came together to end the cattle drive era in Kansas. Rail lines had reached directly into Texas, there was a growing demand for better bred stock, quarantine laws were continually closing off more and more of the open range and what was left was being filled up by homesteaders. Although the trail drives were over by 1885, the cattle business in Kansas did not end. By 1890, the state ranked third in the nation in cattle production.

Resource 2 – Access through link below main file.

Resource 3 – Map of Chisholm Trail



<http://www.hennessey.lib.ok.us/chtrail.jpg>