

Travel and Trade on the Southern High Plains

When we think about contemporary Lubbock, it may be difficult to imagine a place without traffic, housing developments, and department stores. Five hundred years ago, the city we know as Lubbock did not exist. Lubbock was part of a larger network stretching across the Southern High Plains. Spanish explorers traveled through the Llano Estacado, finding a vast grassland with abundant bison but thought to lack water. These explorers crossed paths with Native American groups laden with bison hides and meat on their way to trade with distant populations. By 1883, Lubbock consisted of a little trading post on the banks of Yellowhouse Draw that indicated the beginning of the Americanization of the Southern High Plains and the commencement of an emergent local, national, and international commercial enterprise.

When we think about how people lived long ago, we may have some questions. How did people get food, clothing, and water? Did people just grow or hunt what they needed? How can you get what you need and want without money or credit cards? These questions deal with the subject of economics.

Economics is a study concerned with the description and analysis of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. When studying economics, we are considering choices. These choices can be termed as either wants or needs. We need things such as food, clothing, water, and shelter. Once these needs are satisfied, we can spend time fulfilling our wants. These wants can be listening to music, reading a book, playing games, or anything else you enjoy. Some people have a difficult time fulfilling their needs, so they will spend a lot of time searching for ways to meet these needs. Others have an easier time meeting their needs and can spend more time fulfilling their wants.

Economic decisions are made every day by people in all societies. These decisions are weighed against the cost or benefit of the activity performed. By reading this, you are making an economic decision. The cost of this activity is that you are not doing something else (e.g., watching TV or playing baseball). The benefit is that you are learning valuable information about how people and societies interact with one another and the effect this has on certain groups.

In areas where the population and the environment do not change much over time, the economic activities occurring will change little. However, when the environment is altered or if another population is introduced to an already inhabited area, then the economic choices that can be made are altered. When two different populations meet and interact with one another within a given environment, this is known as a **frontier**.

The concept of frontier involves both a habitation and a social process. If the occupation of the frontier is to be successful by a particular group, certain environmental problems must be overcome and managed. Where can food and water be obtained? How can houses be built? These are some of the problems that must be answered. As a social process, the frontier involves the interaction of two or more societies (intrusive and indigenous) in the competition of land, resources, population and economic growth, and political control. The settling of the frontier by the intrusive society occurs as either a colonization or a transformation process.

Therefore, this program is designed to study how economic decision-making (especially trade) is affected when an intrusive society makes its presence felt and competes for resources with an indigenous or rooted population. In particular, four groups of peoples are studied to view this process on the Southern Plains: The Apache movement into the Southern Plains during the 15th century; the movement of Spaniards and Mexicans into the Southern Plains from the end of the 16th century onward; the Comanche movement into the Southern Plains during the 18th century; and the movement of Europeans and Americans into the Southern Plains during the 19th century. Each of these movements caused a shift in the economic decision making of the populations of the Southern Plains. But where is the Southern Plains ?

Geographical Distinctions

At roughly the 98th meridian running down from North and South Dakota through central Texas, tall grasses of the prairies gave way to the short buffalo grass of the semi-arid country. This land of buffalo grass, the Great Plains, extends to the Rocky Mountains. The Southern Plains sits at the southern region of the Great Plains, primarily in eastern New Mexico, western Texas, and western Oklahoma. The Llano Estacado (also referred to as the Southern High Plains) is part of the Southern Plains. It is a flat grassland of approximately 40,000 sq. miles from the northern boundary at the Canadian River to the southern boundary of the Edwards Plateau.

Economic decision-making existed long before there was a Wal-Mart on the Southern Plains. Economic systems were created for people to get necessities and luxuries. Thousands of years ago, Native American groups arrived on the Llano Estacado and created an economic system that largely revolved around the hunting of bison and the preparing of bison products. These groups were predominately mobile, following the southern bison herds as they grazed through the Southern Plains of North America. Food, water, tool resources, clothing, and shelter were probably of primary importance among these groups. Luxury items may have been a few small items that were easily hauled while traveling. Sometimes, certain bison products were developed in such abundance that excesses were made available. Some of the excess bison products were used as trade items for goods produced from groups in what is now New Mexico. This lifestyle changed very little over the next 10,800 years.

By the 13th century, several previously mobile groups in New Mexico had become sedentary. Today, we refer to these Native American peoples as Pueblo Indians. Trade in food and other items existed between these New Mexican Puebloans and groups from the Llano Estacado. Traders from the Llano Estacado were descendants of the first people to arrive in the area many thousands of years ago. Llano Estacado traders brought meat, tallow, hides, and salt to Puebloans in return for blankets, pottery, obsidian, turquoise, shell, and maize.

The Pueblo of Pecos, along the Pecos River southeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico, was the major destination for the Llano Estacado traders. From the 15th-18th century, its location would bring prominence to Pecos Pueblo as a gateway community. Throughout the centuries, the Pueblo at Pecos connected the people of New Mexico with the people of the Llano Estacado.

Population Migrations - Apache, Spanish, Hispanic, Comanche, Anglo

In the 1400s, the Apaches arrived on the Llano Estacado from the North. The Apaches, nomadic peoples who are part of the Athapaskan speaking family, moved southward from Canada into the plains of eastern New Mexico and onto the Llano Estacado. They probably would have moved even further southward had it not been for the large Spanish presence felt in Mexico starting in the 16th century. The Apache arrival on the Llano Estacado caused a shift in the economic patterns that was largely static for the past 10,500 years.

The Apaches incorporated the trade networks of the indigenous Llano Estacado inhabitants. In terms of the frontier process, the Apaches were an intrusive population. The indigenous groups that began those early trade partnerships with the peoples of the New Mexico region were displaced and may have moved on to new territory or were assimilated by neighboring groups. For the next 200 years, a varied relationship existed between the Puebloans and the Apaches. These groups would experience times of peace and trading along with times of unrest and raiding.

The Apaches thrived in a land abundant in bison, antelope, deer, and wild plants. Their reliance on bison products required seasonal travel. The bison moved northward or southward on the Southern Plains depending upon the season, and the Apaches followed. Bands of Apaches set up temporary campsites that allowed them to follow the bison's movement. In these locations, tipis were erected and meat was preserved through drying. Apaches traveled in groups of extended families (e.g., mother, father, unmarried siblings, and sons-in-law).

In the last decade of the 16th century, the Spanish began settling the area we now know as New Mexico. With their arrival, the existing trade system expanded to include these new Hispanic populations. The first movement of Spaniards into the New Mexico region occurred in 1598, under the lead of Juan de Oñate. Their trek began at the city of Santa Barbara and crossed the Concho River, then followed a land route to the Rio Grande River. The Rio Grande was then followed northward until they reached the northern limits of the Pueblo Indian realm, near present-day Santa Fe. This trail would later be known as the Camino Real.

Other Spanish people came to New Mexico from Mexico to partake in land grants offered by the Spanish government. They too probably followed the Camino Real from Mexico to New Mexico. Along the Rio Grande River Valley, settlements were created. In a short period of time, the Hispanic inhabitants moved east from the Rio Grande River Valley to utilize the grass and shrub covered plains for livestock grazing and settlements. The movement of the Spaniards and their black and mestizo domestic servants into the New Mexico frontier region was not without its troubles. Because the Spaniards were an intrusive population, a strain on land, resources, and political control ensued.

The Spaniards that entered this region sought to control and exploit the Puebloan peoples. Puebloans were compelled to provide labor and maize to the Spanish inhabitants. The Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1680 was caused by the strain that the Spaniards created by occupying this region. This revolt took place in the northern limits of the Pueblo Indian territory and forced Spanish inhabitants to move southward. By 1692, Spaniards had reconquered and resettled the area. In the aftermath of

reconquest, the Spaniards had increased interaction with the Southern Plains Indians, especially the Apaches, rather than with the Puebloan groups. The Puebloan peoples were bitter from the Spanish movement into their territory, and the Spanish were bitter about the Pueblo Indian Revolt. The interaction between the Spanish and the Southern Plains Indians took the form of intermarriage, trade, and political alliances.

One major aspect of the Spanish movement into the Southern Plains was the reintroduction of the horse. Horses had roamed the Southern Plains prior to 11,000 years ago, then became extinct at the end of the Pleistocene. Apaches, along with other native groups, acquired horses from the Spanish settlements in New Mexico by the mid 1600s. The horses were first used by the Apaches as a food resource, but were soon realized as an exceptional pack animal. This altered the ability for Native American groups to move goods for trade, hunt, and commence warfare and raids.

From the first Spanish settlement until 1820, the New Mexico colonies would remain a relatively isolated, remote, and an unimportant outpost for the Spanish. The isolation of this Hispanic population allowed the formation of a strong ethnic identity now known as the Hispano. The occurrence of the Spanish onto the Southern Plains had dramatically affected life for native peoples living in this area in relation to trade items and socio-political matters.

Another group entered the Southern Plains trade network in the early 1700s. Comanches migrated into the Southern Plains from Colorado and Wyoming. Unlike the early Spanish explorers, the Comanches saw the Llano Estacado as a land of abundance. After the spring and summer rains, the Llano Estacado netted an abundance of wild plants and animals. Spring-fed streams flowed through the draws and playas (small lake basins) caught the seasonal rains. Escarpments, buttes, and canyons served to protect the Comanches from enemies and bad weather. Like their predecessors, the Apaches, the Comanche's economic activities involved hunting bison, trading, raiding, and warfare.

Comanche movement into the Southern Plains was fueled by better economic opportunities centered around the horse. During their migrations, they acquired horses from an exchange network that reached into the Northern Plains. The chance to be in closer contact with the source of these horses was a high incentive to move into the Southern Plains. The horse made it far easier to engage in trading, hunting, and warfare. Horses provided faster transportation over longer distances and a larger carrying capacity for goods.

Economic competition, warfare, and raiding led to new partnerships between the Spanish, Puebloan, and Comanche groups. The Comanches appropriated the position of the Apaches in the established, far flung trade system. During the early part of the 18th century (around 1720), Comanche actions consisted of the seizure of all Apache land and the destruction, capture, and the forceful movement of all Apache peoples from their rooted position in the Southern Plains. By 1750, the remaining Apaches retreated from the Llano Estacado into New Mexico, Arizona, and southern Texas, leaving Comanches in a position to commence trade and warfare unabated by other Native American groups.

During the 18th century, Hispano peoples living in New Mexico were isolated within their local districts, remaining relatively self sufficient. Two annual events had become

institutionalized by the Spanish government during the second half of the 18th century that brought together Hispanos, Puebloan, and Southern Plains Indian groups.

Trade Fairs

The trade fairs began as a diplomatic measure by the Spanish to control Comanche raiding. Each summer, Hispanos, Southern Plains Indians, and local Puebloans came together at Taos, New Mexico. Taos was in a rugged setting, nestled in a steep mountain range. A network of wilderness trails connected Taos with the homelands of numerous Native American groups. The rugged landscape required that the transportation of goods occur by way of horse, mule, or on foot.

The Taos trade fair was an open air market. At the trade fair, Hispano knives, horses, woolen blankets, and beads were traded for Southern Plains Indian deerskins, bison robes, and captives. Local Taos Pueblo Indians also traded pottery and sweetbread, supposedly a favorite of the Southern Plains Indians.

The trade in captives, however, was a major focus of the trade fairs. Many groups participated in the raids of native peoples. Captives at the trade fair were bartered to wealthy Spaniards who used their labor in silver mines in Northern Mexico or as domestic servants in their residences in New Mexico. These domestic servants became known as mestizos (people who had both Indian and Spanish parentage).

The animal skins and captives, along with woolen goods, livestock, and wine bartered at the fair, were transported in caravans to Chihuahua, where, at a fair held each January, they would be exchanged for hardware of all kinds, a variety of textiles, and luxury goods. Representatives of the settlements in New Mexico formed the caravans that would depart in November and return in April. The round-trip took 40 days. These annual trips were warranted to keep the Hispano inhabitants supplied with necessities and further served to tie the frontier Hispanics with the core society that lived in the area of Mexico.

In spite of these formal agreements, informal trade still existed to fill in the gaps. The Peace Treaty of 1786 between Governor de Anza of New Mexico and the Comanche extended existing trade networks. For the Spanish, the treaty opened up a route between Santa Fe and its other colonial center, San Antonio. The Comanches benefited from the expansion of the trade network because it allowed them to acquire new trade goods.

The Comanches played a large role in the circulation of goods throughout the Southern Plains. Spanish officials provided "diplomatic gifts" to the Comanches in exchange for an agreement to cease warring and raiding on the new Hispanic settlements along the Pecos Valley. These gifts included wooden canes, medallions, capes, fine fabrics, sugar, and tobacco. In turn, the Comanches traded these items to other groups on the Southern Plains.

This treaty also removed the fear many traders had of coming onto the Llano Estacado. Comancheros were Hispanic traders from New Mexico who came onto the Llano Estacado to trade with the Comanches. The Comancheros carried goods such as metal points, brass rings, silver buckles, ammunition, candy, flannel cloth, and cattle in exchange for meat products, captives, and cattle from the Comanches. Cattle were

often gathered illegally by Comanches from East-Central Texan ranches and then moved across Texas into New Mexico where they were traded to Comancheros or other Hispanic New Mexicans. Comanchero trade flourished until the late 1870s when the majority of Comanches were placed on reservations by the United States government.

In the 1800s, important events in the region extended the boundaries of trade. In 1821, Mexico gained independence from Spain and the small, remote colony of Santa Fe began to gain prominence in the eyes of American and Mexican traders. Santa Fe became a portal through which American manufactured goods could enter Mexico.

The Santa Fe Trail was the route that merged three cultures, American pioneers, Hispanics, and Native Americans. The Santa Fe Trail stretched 900 miles, from Independence, Missouri through the Great Plains, terminating in Santa Fe. Since Santa Fe was ruled by Mexico at the time, this route linked the United States with Mexico.

Once in New Mexico, many used Pecos Pueblo as a resting stop on their way to Santa Fe. Most commerce was hauled over the Jornada Trail, a trail that crossed over the eastern fork of the Pecos River near present day Las Vegas, New Mexico. The trail led travelers to Pecos Pueblo by dipping south and re-crossing the river on its western fork. In Pecos, contact between Puebloan peoples, Hispanics, and Anglos flourished. Once they moved on to Santa Fe, traders were taxed up to 60% by the Mexican government for bringing in goods. This tax was an import tax. The same type of tax is used today by many countries when allowing foreign goods to enter their country for sale.

The trail also injected the concept of currency into the trading network. Earlier trade in the region through trade fairs and Comanchero trade focused on the exchange of goods: a barter economy. Eastern traders, primarily Americans and Europeans, returning from Santa Fe netted both goods and currency in the form of gold or silver bullion. Gold came from mines in Santa Fe and the silver came from mines in Northern Mexico. This currency then was circulated back into the eastern markets.

In 1846, Mexico transferred control of New Mexico, California, Arizona, and parts of Nevada, Utah, and Colorado to the United States through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Santa Fe was no longer a foreign outpost, but one stop in a long network that connected the Eastern United States to the West. The use of the Santa Fe Trail as a portal for trading goods between Independence, Missouri and Santa Fe would end in 1872 with the establishment of the Santa Fe Railroad. (However, parts of the Santa Fe Trail can still be seen and is used as a source of income today in conjunction with several National Historic Parks, Trail Centers, and Museums: (1) Independence, MO- National Frontier Trails Center; (2) Lyons, KS- Coronado/Quivira Museum; (3) East Elkhart, KS- Morton County Historical Society; (4) Larned, KS- Santa Fe Trail Center; (5) Trinidad, CO- Trinidad History Museum (6) Santa Fe, NM- Palace of the Governors; and (7) Las Vegas, NM.)

An Animal-Driven Economy

The economy of the Southern Plains can historically be linked to three distinct animals: *bison* (hunting), from 11,100 years ago to the 1880s; *sheep* (grazing) , from the 1870s to the 1880s; and *cattle* (driving and ranching) , from the 1880s to the 1900s.

It is estimated that between 30-40 million bison existed on the Great Plains before their over-exploitation in the 1870s. As long as the bison roamed the Southern Plains, a profitable market was there to be utilized. This is true of the original Native peoples, later Native American peoples (Apaches and Comanches), as well as European and American peoples.

During the 17th century, Hispanic bison hunters started to exploit the bison market. The demand for hides, meat, and tallow in Santa Fe and Mexico led some New Mexicans out on the Llano Estacado to hunt. These individuals are referred to as ciboleros. Their method of hunting bison was akin to that of the Comanches, where the thrill of the chase was as important a part of the hunt as was the kill. As such, the bison population numbers were not threatened by the ciboleros. However, the same statement cannot be made for the American buffalo hunters of the late 19th century.

Since the late 18th century, Americans and Europeans had been steadily and increasingly moving westward across the United States. The Southern Plains, especially the Llano Estacado, was one of America's last frontiers to be encroached upon. By 1860, American entrepreneurs had moved into the Great Plains in hopes of developing a market of bison hides for the American markets back East. If the tanning of bison hides for leather was successful in the Eastern markets, then a prodigious amount of hides and money could be procured. The venture was successful and the market for bison hides was wide open. American buffalo hunters had poured onto the Great Plains in search of this potential market. As the population of bison shrunk, hunters moved further south. By 1875, buffalo hunters set camps up on the Southern Plains, in the towns of Snyder and Rath's City.

The destruction and utilization of the bison population was further strengthened by the position of the United States government. If the bison populations were propelled to low numbers by American buffalo hunters, the Plains Indians would not have an economy to work with, because the bison was their economic mainstay, in relation to food, shelter, and trade. Within fifteen years, American buffalo hunters had decimated the bison populations on the entire Great Plains and destroyed the economic potential of the bison and therefore, the life of the Southern Plains Indians. The disappearance of the bison and the shrinkage of land through increased settlement by Americans and Europeans on the Southern Plains, led to more extensive raiding by the Native American populations.

The year 1875 marks also the removal of the Comanche peoples from the lands they occupied on the Southern Plains to reservations in Oklahoma. The ninth and tenth regiments of the United States Cavalry were comprised of white officers and African-American enlisted men known as buffalo soldiers. They were sent to defend settlers from Native Americans, Mexicans, and Comancheros throughout the Southern Plains and West Texas. In a series of battles known as the Red River War, these regiments were successful in defeating the Comanches and forcing them to relocate to reservation lands in Oklahoma.

The dwindling of the bison population and the removal of the Comanches allowed another animal to occur on the Llano Estacado for a short time. Sheep were transported to New Mexico by the Spanish in the 1500s. In the 1870s and 1880s, pastores brought them onto the Llano Estacado. Pastores were Hispanic sheep herders from New Mexico that had moved out of the Rio Grande and Pecos River Valleys, crossed Eastern

New Mexico, and entered the Llano Estacado along the Canadian River. Sheep were well suited to feed on the mixed grassland of the Llano Estacado. Flocks of sheep scattered along the Canadian River and its tributaries, and the pastores prospered. They exploited their sheep when a market for wool opened up in the new mining towns in California, Colorado, and other areas of the Southwest. In the 1880 U.S. census, sheep actually outnumbered cattle in the Texas Panhandle.

The pastores initially settled in the Canadian River Valley, where they constructed towns known as plazas. Some of the plazas consisted of a few adobe structures while others had saloons and stores. They were located near springs where acequias (irrigation ditches) were dug to irrigate fruit orchards and fields of beans, corns, grains, melons and peppers. The pastores brought with them the traditions of their Hispanic settlements in New Mexico. Weddings, dances, and games were all part of the fabric of life in their new villages.

Rock corrals provide evidence of the pastores using the Llano Estacado. These sites were generally surrounded by good pasture land and relatively close to a water source. The corrals were built of locally found caliche boulders. They were single space enclosures, having no partitions, and either oval or rectangular in shape. The size of the corrals varies, but all were substantial structures requiring time and effort for their construction.

The pastores, however, would not last long on the Llano Estacado. Charles Goodnight was a prominent rancher that arrived on the Southern Plains and negotiated arrangements with the Canadian River Valley pastores to subdivide the land. Soon after the negotiations, the number of ranchers grew and barbed wire fences were constructed. As free range disappeared, so too did the pastores. The pastores and their sheep drifted back to New Mexico where free range still existed. By 1890, cattle would clearly outnumber sheep on the Llano Estacado and the Southern Plains.

In the early 1800s, the seeds of another important Texas enterprise, the cattle industry, were sown. These seeds were not reaped on the Llano Estacado until the very late 1880s. When Mexico gained control of the Spanish territory in Texas, they offered land to both Mexican and American settlers. Some of these individuals decided to raise livestock. As a result, Texas longhorns (tough Spanish cattle) were spread westward across Texas from the grasslands between the Rio Grande and Nueces rivers.

About 5 million longhorns roamed the region in 1865, largely unattended and unclaimed, and hardly worth bothering about because they could not be profitably marketed. In that same year, the Missouri Pacific Railroad stretched westward into Sedalia, Missouri. That terminal connected to the hungry eastern markets, and the \$3 longhorn might command \$40 back East. This realization by Texas ranchers set off the famous Long Drive. Cowboys began to herd Texas cattle a thousand miles or more north to the railroads that were pushing west across to Kansas. The wide open cattle towns captured the nation's imagination as a symbol of the wild west. The reality was much more ordinary. The cowboys, perhaps a third of them African Americans and Hispanics, were in fact farm hands on horseback working long hours under harsh conditions for small pay. These African American cowboys consisted of native Texans and those who moved from the southern states after the Civil War to find employment. Many had been Buffalo Soldiers during and after the Civil War. The Long Drive was actually a makeshift method of bridging a gap in the developing transportation system. As soon as railroads reached the Texas range country during the 1870s, stockmen

abandoned the hazardous and wasteful Long Drive for a more settled style of ranching. After the Long Drive ended, many of the cowboys were employed in the newly burgeoning western industry of the railroad. Others took their skills of roping, riding, and wrangling to area ranches and continued their itinerant lifestyle.

By 1884, the Llano Estacado was transformed into free range country. Ranching was made possible by the introduction of the windmill and its ability to provide water for cattle.

The first ranch to operate on the Llano Estacado was the IOA, established in 1884 and located on the west line of Lubbock County. The land was treated as a free commodity by most Americans and Europeans, despite the fact that Native American groups still existed on the Southern Plains. Ranchers would claim as much land as they could qualify for as settlers under the Federal Homesteading Act of 1862. As cattle ranchers improved the scrawny longhorns through crossbreeding, with Hereford and Angus cattle, and herds multiplied, ranchers quickly became substantial operators.

The XIT Ranch, also established in 1884, covered over 3 million acres of land and had an average of 150,000 head of cattle by 1886. The XIT Ranch, was arguably the most substantial ranch operation on the Southern High Plains, if not the world. This ranch was an English-owned enterprise, not an American-owned ranch, like that of the IOA. These and other ranches had a direct effect on the pastores grazing their sheep on the Llano Estacado, driving them back into the Pecos Valley of New Mexico. A third major ranch to operate in West Texas was the Slaughter, or Lazy S Ranch, established in 1898.

Soon after the free ranging of cattle began on the Llano Estacado, it was quickly replaced with fenced ranching. Ranching enclosures brought several advantages to the ranch landowner: a reduction in the size of the labor force, better control and care of the herd, and controlled feeding by shifting the cattle from pasture to pasture in a planned grazing program. In 1887, the XIT began fencing portions of their land and the IOA Ranch soon followed suit. By 1895, ranches had almost complete possession of the Southern High Plains. But as quickly as the ranching enterprises entered the Llano Estacado, they soon became a relic of the past. As an example, in the census of 1910, the Texas Panhandle's cattle population (162,670 head of cattle) had dropped to 25% of its former size from a decade previous. One can surmise that the same could be said of ranches on the Llano Estacado. The reduction of cattle population was due to the break up of big ranches into marketable land for use as crop-farm economy.

If cattle ranching had remained the exclusive enterprise on the Llano Estacado, it would be seemingly impossible for the development of a large city, such as Lubbock, to occur. Ranches do not build big towns, for ranches do not in themselves foster population. Crop-farming was an aspect that allowed Lubbock to grow as a major metropolis. However, the community of Lubbock began because of the entrepreneurial resolve of one man in 1883: George Singer (*see the Singer Case Study on page 38 for the full story*).

After Singer arrived, settlement of the Lubbock area was slow due partly to its relatively remote location and to the enterprise of cattle ranching. Gradually, by 1900, Lubbock grew as a town to include a hotel, newspaper office, a barbershop, a grain

store, and two stables. Over the next 30 years, cattle ranching gave way increasingly to individual crop-farming and, as such, the number of inhabitants also increased.

By 1905, the Lubbock environs were a land of well-tilled farms producing a wide variety of crops. These pioneer crops and their cultivators served to pave the way for future extensive productions for consumption and commerce, both at home and abroad. Crop-farms consisted of many different plant types: maize, corn, cabbage, millet, and sorghum. However, the most famous crop-farm product of the Llano Estacado and Lubbock was cotton. By 1924, cotton had become the Llano Estacado's most important crop and Lubbock County led the way as Texas' leading producer. Cotton production and cotton acreage expanded unabated throughout the Llano Estacado until 1949, when acreage controls were placed that slowed production. Cotton still remains a very important economic enterprise in and around Lubbock today.

Lubbock as a commercial and retail area can trace its roots to the Singer Store. However, it was not until the 1940s and 1950s that Lubbock became fully immersed in the retail industry. Chain-stores, such as White Auto Stores, Western Auto Stores, Woolworth's, Kresge, Lerner, and Safeway, were established in Lubbock during the 1950s. The movement of these stores into Lubbock was indicative of the growth of the city, in both economic and population contexts. The establishment of these retail enterprises and future stores like them, are the latest economic shift in the Southern High Plains. The retail industry allowed people to purchase a large variety of goods, that otherwise were not previously available to Southern High Plains inhabitants. Eventually, these stores would give rise to the Wal-Marts, K-Marts, supermarkets, and mall shops that can be seen throughout Lubbock today.

The encroachment of Americans and Europeans into the American West caused a dramatic shift in the economy of the Southern Plains. The growth of Lubbock and the movement of Americans and Europeans into the Southern Plains had a dramatic effect on the populations living on the Southern Plains. The colonization resulted not only in the displacement of Native Americans and Hispanics, but also the assimilation of these peoples who either remained or re-entered the Southern Plains. The Americanization of the Southern Plains also brought with it the production and distribution of new types of goods and services such as the electric light, automobile, and large scale, intensive, monoculture crop-farming.

The economic choices we make today are a result of the Americanization of the Southern Plains. However, the choices we make are also a part of all of the frontier processes that have occurred over the past 500 years. Some scholars question if the Southern Plains and the Llano Estacado are undergoing another frontier process, or was the Americanization of the Southern Plains complete and still rooted? You decide on information available.