

traded regularly at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River. Conditions changed gradually, however. By the late 1840's the fur trade was declining in volume. Emigrants crossing the continent brought cholera and other sicknesses, and epidemics decimated the Cheyenne as well as other tribes. Buffalo began to grow scarce in some areas and there were growing difficulties in obtaining adequate subsistence, let alone surplus robes for trade. In 1851 the Cheyenne signed the Treaty of Fort Laramie, Wyoming in which the United States recognized the title of the Cheyenne and the Arapaho to a huge tract of land extending from the North Platte to the Arkansas River. At this time there were no clearcut north and south divisions of the tribe even though some bands tended to stay more in the vicinity of the Arkansas and Bent's Fort. The various bands still shifted from north to south with freedom, and the Sun Dance and Arrow Renewal ceremonies were held as a single united tribe. But in the 1850's white encroachment upon Cheyenne lands began which resulted eventually in skirmishes, raids, battles, and full-fledged wars.

The Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859 brought hundreds of thousands of white settlers to the South Platte region--the heart of Cheyenne and Arapaho lands as defined by the Fort Laramie Treaty. Violent conflict soon broke out. The treaties signed at Fort Wise, Kansas in 1851, and at a meeting on the Little Arkansas River in 1855 were both instigated in order to free lands in Colorado and Kansas for white settlement by removing the Indians to reservations outside the line of movement to the gold fields. Both treaties were unsuccessful in averting war since a majority of the bands of both tribes did not wish to give up their hunting lands. After 1861 separate treaties were made for the northern and southern divisions of both the Cheyenne and the Arapaho tribes.

The Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek in 1867 was the final and most