Name _____

CHAPTER 5 / Smallpox and the Slaughter of the Bison

Both the introduction of smallpox and the decimation of the bison herds changed forever the life of the Plains Indians. Read the two passages below. Using information from your reading, write a paragraph analyzing these two tragedies and comparing the long-term effect on the Plains Indians.

> "The great band of [Assiniboine], say ten thousand strong, and the Crees numbering about three thousand have been almost annihilated. . . . The disease had reached the Blackfeet of the Rocky Mountains. . . . All the Indians on the Columbia River as far as the Pacific Ocean will share the fate of those before alluded to . . . [The Great Plains are being] literally depopulated and converted into one great grave yard."
>
> —Letter from Joshua Pilcher, Indian Agent, to William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 1838

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> "The civilization of the Indian is impossible while the buffalo remains upon the plains. I would not seriously regret the total disappearance of the buffalo from our western prairies, in its effect upon the Indians, regarding it as a means of hastening their sense of dependence upon the products of the soil and their own labors."
>
> —Interior Secretary Columbus Delano, 1873