

# xhosa cattle killing movement definition ap world history

**xhosa cattle killing movement definition ap world history** refers to a significant and tragic socio-religious movement among the Xhosa people of South Africa in the mid-19th century. This movement is pivotal in AP World History for illustrating the complex interplay of indigenous belief systems, colonial pressures, and the consequences of resistance movements during the colonial era. The Xhosa cattle killing movement arose from prophecies that urged the Xhosa to kill their cattle and destroy their crops to bring about the resurrection of ancestors and the expulsion of European settlers. This article explores the historical background, causes, key figures, and consequences of the movement, providing a comprehensive understanding essential for AP World History studies. The following sections will clarify the origins, beliefs, and impacts of this movement within the broader context of African resistance and colonial encounters.

- Historical Background of the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement
- Causes and Catalysts of the Movement
- Key Figures and Prophecies
- Impact and Consequences
- Significance in AP World History

## Historical Background of the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement

The Xhosa cattle killing movement took place in the Eastern Cape region of what is now South Africa between 1856 and 1857. The Xhosa people, who relied heavily on cattle for their economy, social status, and cultural practices, were facing increasing pressure from British colonial expansion. This period was marked by a series of frontier wars and land dispossession, which destabilized traditional Xhosa society. The movement emerged within this context of social upheaval, economic hardship, and spiritual uncertainty. Understanding the historical background is crucial to grasping why the Xhosa people embraced such a radical and devastating course of action.

## Colonial Encroachment and Frontier Wars

During the 19th century, British colonial forces steadily expanded into Xhosa territories, leading to repeated conflicts known as the Frontier Wars. These wars resulted in significant loss of land for the Xhosa, disruption of their pastoral economy, and increased tension between indigenous groups and European settlers. The mounting pressure from colonial authorities created an environment ripe for social and spiritual crisis.

## **Socioeconomic Conditions**

The Xhosa economy was predominantly based on cattle herding, which was central not only to wealth but also to social and spiritual life. The loss of cattle due to disease, colonial raids, and environmental factors compounded the hardships faced by the Xhosa. These socioeconomic stresses contributed to the desperation that fueled the cattle killing movement.

## **Causes and Catalysts of the Movement**

The Xhosa cattle killing movement definition ap world history includes understanding the complex causes behind the movement. It was not merely a spontaneous act of defiance but the result of a combination of spiritual beliefs, social pressures, and colonial impacts. The movement was sparked by a prophecy that promised renewal and liberation from colonial domination through a specific set of actions.

## **Spiritual Beliefs and Prophecy**

The movement was initiated after a young girl named Nongqawuse claimed to have received a prophecy from ancestral spirits. The prophecy instructed the Xhosa people to kill all their cattle and destroy their crops to bring about the resurrection of ancestors and the removal of colonial settlers from their land. This millenarian vision promised a new era of prosperity and freedom if the people obeyed these commands.

## **Environmental and Epidemic Factors**

At the time, the Xhosa were also suffering from a cattle disease known as lung sickness, which devastated herds. Additionally, drought and famine were affecting the region. These natural and ecological stresses helped convince many Xhosa that the prophecy was a divine solution to their suffering.

## **Colonial Oppression and Loss of Land**

The continuous loss of land and autonomy to British settlers, as well as the imposition of colonial governance, created widespread resentment. The spiritual movement was both a reaction to and a form of resistance against the colonial forces that threatened the Xhosa way of life.

## **Key Figures and Prophecies**

Central to the Xhosa cattle killing movement definition ap world history are the individuals who played pivotal roles in its propagation and execution. Their leadership and the messages they conveyed influenced the course of events profoundly.

## **Nongqawuse: The Prophetess**

Nongqawuse, a teenage girl, is the most significant figure associated with the movement. She declared that the ancestors had appeared to her with instructions to destroy cattle and crops. Her prophecy promised that if the people obeyed, the dead would rise, the British settlers would be swept away, and the land would be restored to the Xhosa.

## **Jongintaba: The Chief**

Jongintaba, the paramount chief of the Xhosa at the time, was initially skeptical of the prophecy but eventually supported the movement due to its widespread acceptance among his people. His leadership was crucial in mobilizing the Xhosa to follow the prophetic instructions.

## **Other Spiritual Leaders**

Various diviners and elders also played roles in endorsing or interpreting the prophecy, adding legitimacy to the movement. Their involvement helped unify the community behind the millenarian vision.

## **Impact and Consequences**

The Xhosa cattle killing movement definition ap world history includes understanding the devastating consequences of the movement, which had profound social, economic, and political effects on the Xhosa people and their interactions with colonial powers.

## **Mass Starvation and Economic Collapse**

Following the prophecy, the Xhosa slaughtered an estimated 400,000 to 500,000 cattle and destroyed crops. When the predicted resurrection and liberation did not occur, the people were left facing severe famine and economic collapse. Tens of thousands of Xhosa died from starvation, and many were forced to seek work as laborers for colonial settlers.

## **Weakening of Xhosa Resistance**

The aftermath of the movement significantly weakened the Xhosa's ability to resist further colonial encroachment. The loss of livestock, food supplies, and population reduced their military and social strength, making it easier for the British to assert control over their territories.

## **Long-Term Social and Cultural Effects**

The cattle killing movement altered traditional Xhosa society, including changes in leadership dynamics and shifts in cultural practices. The trauma from the movement also influenced subsequent generations and their responses to colonial rule.

# Significance in AP World History

The Xhosa cattle killing movement definition AP World History is significant for illustrating key themes in global history, including indigenous resistance to imperialism, the role of religion and prophecy in social movements, and the consequences of colonial expansion. This event provides a case study of how colonialism disrupted traditional societies and how indigenous peoples responded in complex and sometimes tragic ways.

## Example of Millenarian Movements

The Xhosa cattle killing movement is an example of a millenarian or prophetic movement, where oppressed groups seek radical change through spiritual or supernatural means. Understanding such movements helps contextualize similar events globally and their impact on history.

## Insights into Colonial Encounters

The movement highlights the tensions and conflicts inherent in colonial encounters, showing the devastating effects of land dispossession and cultural disruption. It provides insight into how colonialism affected indigenous economies and social structures.

## Relevance to Themes of Resistance and Adaptation

In AP World History, the movement exemplifies themes of resistance, adaptation, and the struggle for identity under colonial rule, making it an essential topic for understanding African history and colonial dynamics.

- Historical context and colonial pressures
- Spiritual and prophetic motivations
- Social and economic consequences
- Impact on indigenous resistance
- Broader implications for world history studies

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What was the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement in AP World

## **History?**

The Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement was a millenarian movement in 1856-1857 where the Xhosa people in South Africa killed their cattle and destroyed crops, believing it would bring about the resurrection of their ancestors and drive away colonial settlers.

## **Why did the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement occur?**

The movement occurred due to a combination of social, economic, and spiritual factors, including dissatisfaction with British colonial rule, cattle diseases, drought, and a prophecy by a young girl named Nongqawuse promising renewal if cattle were killed.

## **Who was Nongqawuse in the context of the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement?**

Nongqawuse was a young Xhosa prophetess whose visions and prophecies inspired the cattle killing movement, claiming that killing cattle and destroying crops would lead to the resurrection of ancestors and the removal of colonial settlers.

## **What was the impact of the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement on the Xhosa society?**

The movement led to a devastating famine and the death of thousands of Xhosa people, weakening their society and making them more vulnerable to British colonial domination.

## **How is the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement relevant to AP World History?**

It exemplifies indigenous resistance to colonialism, the role of religion and prophecy in social movements, and the severe consequences of colonial disruption on African societies.

## **What role did British colonialism play in the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement?**

British colonial expansion disrupted Xhosa society through land dispossession and economic hardship, which contributed to the social unrest that fueled the cattle killing movement.

## **How did the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement end?**

The movement ended in disaster as the prophecy did not come true, resulting in widespread famine, the collapse of Xhosa resistance, and increased British control over the region.

## **What were the long-term effects of the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement?**

Long-term effects included depopulation due to famine, loss of cattle wealth, cultural trauma, and strengthened British colonial dominance in South Africa.

# How does the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement illustrate millenarian movements in world history?

It illustrates how millenarian movements often arise during times of crisis, combining religious prophecy with social and political resistance to envision a radical transformation of society.

## What lessons does the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement teach about indigenous responses to colonialism?

It teaches that indigenous responses could be complex, involving spiritual beliefs and desperate strategies that sometimes led to tragic outcomes, highlighting the deep impact of colonial disruption.

## Additional Resources

### 1. *The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement: Prophecy and History in South Africa*

This book explores the origins and impacts of the Xhosa cattle-killing movement of 1856-1857, analyzing the prophetic visions that led to the mass slaughter of cattle. It delves into the socio-political context of colonial pressures and indigenous responses, providing insight into the devastating consequences for the Xhosa people. The work situates the event within broader themes of resistance and cultural upheaval in African history.

### 2. *Prophecy and Power: The Xhosa Cattle-Killer Movement in Colonial South Africa*

Focusing on the interplay between spiritual belief and political resistance, this book examines how the Xhosa cattle-killing movement served both as a religious phenomenon and a form of anti-colonial protest. It discusses key figures such as Nongqawuse and assesses the movement's role in reshaping Xhosa society. The analysis extends to the implications for understanding indigenous resistance in world history.

### 3. *When Cattle Die: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing and the Transformation of Southern Africa*

This comprehensive study traces the historical events leading to the cattle-killing, the immediate aftermath, and its long-term effects on Southern African societies. It integrates oral histories and colonial records to provide a nuanced narrative of the tragedy. The book also explores themes of famine, displacement, and colonial domination in the 19th century.

### 4. *Apocalypse and Resistance: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement in Global Context*

By placing the Xhosa cattle-killing within a global framework of millenarian movements, this book compares it to other indigenous uprisings influenced by prophetic visions. It highlights the cultural and historical significance of the movement in AP World History curricula, emphasizing patterns of colonial resistance and spiritual activism. The text encourages critical reflection on the consequences of cultural encounters.

### 5. *The Prophetic Challenge: Xhosa Society and the Colonial Encounter*

This work delves into the tensions between traditional Xhosa beliefs and the expanding influence of British colonialism. It examines how prophecy became a tool for social cohesion as well as a catalyst for tragedy during the cattle-killing movement. The book provides context for understanding how indigenous communities navigated colonial pressures in the 19th century.

### 6. *Echoes of Devastation: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing and Its Legacy*

Focusing on the aftermath, this book analyzes the demographic, economic, and cultural impacts of the cattle-killing on the Xhosa people. It discusses how the movement's failure led to increased colonial control and loss of autonomy. The narrative also explores resilience and adaptation in the face of profound disruption.

#### *7. Faith and Famine: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement and Colonial South Africa*

This title explores the complex relationship between spiritual belief and material conditions that culminated in the cattle-killing. It highlights the role of Nongqawuse's prophecy in mobilizing the Xhosa during a period of hardship and colonial encroachment. The book situates the movement within larger discussions of famine, faith, and resistance in world history.

#### *8. Resistance through Ritual: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement*

Examining the ritualistic aspects of the cattle-killing, this book investigates how cultural practices intersected with political resistance. It considers the movement as a form of indigenous protest against colonial disruption of traditional life. The text provides valuable insights for understanding the role of ritual in social and political movements.

#### *9. Colonialism and Catastrophe: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing in Historical Perspective*

This scholarly work contextualizes the cattle-killing movement within the broader history of colonial expansion in southern Africa. It addresses the economic and political pressures that precipitated the crisis and evaluates the responses of both the Xhosa and colonial authorities. The book offers a critical perspective on the consequences of colonialism for indigenous populations.

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