

Farms Without Ownership

Trace how tenant farmers challenged New York's patroon land system.

7.7d "The Anti-Rent movement in New York State was an attempt by tenant farmers to protest the landownership system."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show why tenant farmers opposed the land system, circle two actions they took, and number one result of their protest.

The Anti-Rent Movement

- ① In the 1800s, many families farmed land in New York's Hudson Valley and Helderberg region that they did not own. Large landholders, called patroons, had inherited huge estates from colonial land grants. Tenant farmers signed long leases and paid rent, often with crops or cash. Some leases also required a payment when a tenant sold or transferred a farm. Families improved fields and built homes, yet the landholder still controlled the land. This system left many tenants feeling trapped and unfairly treated.
- ② Anger grew in 1839 when tenants in Albany and Rensselaer Counties organized the Anti-Rent movement. They wanted an end to the old lease system and a fair chance to own the farms they worked. Protesters held meetings, refused to pay rent, and sometimes stopped officials from carrying out evictions. Some wore calico cloth or disguises, partly to hide their identities. The movement was not only about one missed payment. It challenged a landownership system that gave a few families power over many working farmers.
- ③ Conflict sometimes turned violent. In 1845, during rent collection in Delaware County, deputy sheriff Osman N. Steele was killed. State officials sent militia forces, and some Anti-Rent leaders were arrested and convicted. Protest also changed politics. New York's 1846 constitution prohibited future agricultural leases longer than twelve years that required rent or service. It did not cancel every existing lease. Over time, estate sales and legal challenges helped weaken the patroon system, and many tenants bought their farms.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did many tenant farmers believe the landownership system was unfair? Use two details from the passage.

2 What were two actions Anti-Rent protesters took to challenge the lease system?

3 Why does the passage say the movement was not only about one missed rent payment?

4 Describe one response by state officials and one change that followed the Anti-Rent movement.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write 4 to 5 sentences explaining why the Anti-Rent movement was a protest against the landownership system, not just a dispute about rent. Use at least two facts from the passage, including one condition tenant farmers faced and one action or result of the movement.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show why tenant farmers opposed the land system, circle two actions they took, and number one result of their protest. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did many tenant farmers believe the landownership system was unfair? Use two details from the passage.	They worked and improved farms they did not own, paid rent, and in some cases had to make a payment to sell or transfer a farm while landholders still controlled the land.
2	What were two actions Anti-Rent protesters took to challenge the lease system?	They held meetings, refused to pay rent, and sometimes stopped officials from carrying out evictions. Any two.
3	Why does the passage say the movement was not only about one missed rent payment?	The movement challenged the whole landownership system, which gave a few landholding families power over many tenant farmers.
4	Describe one response by state officials and one change that followed the Anti-Rent movement.	Officials sent militia and arrested some leaders. The 1846 constitution prohibited future agricultural leases over twelve years requiring rent or service. Over time, estate sales and legal challenges weakened the system.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Anti-Rent movement protested a system in which tenant farmers worked land they did not own. Many families paid rent and improved farms while patroons still controlled the land. Tenants organized meetings and refused to pay rent to challenge this system. The movement helped bring legal changes that weakened the old patroon lease system.

Accept responses that explain the larger conflict over ownership and control of farmland, rather than treating the movement as only a rent-payment dispute. Students should support their explanation with at least one tenant condition and one protest action or result from the passage.