

7: WESTWARD EXPANSION

ESSENTIAL TERMS



KEY CONCEPTS

Manifest Destiny: Belief held by many Americans, especially in the 1800s that it was clear that the nation would spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. This belief fueled expansion, including migration of pioneers, war with Mexico and Native Americans, and a belief in the superiority of White, Christian culture.

Wild West: A term that refers to the West during the early years of settlement when there was little formal government, and few women.

Frontier Myth: Romanticized idea of what the West was like before it was fully settled. This idea contains such concepts as lawmen who stood up for justice against evil outlaws, noble cowboys braving the elements to drive cattle north, and independent miners struggling against nature to win their reward. Values such as independence, justice, and freedom are part of this idea which is still celebrated in America today.

Ghost Dance: Religious movement that swept Native American communities in the late-1800s. Led by Wovoka, it promised that if tribes who participated in a special dance, the Whites would disappear and a savior, ancestors and buffalo would return. Whites feared it was a sign up a coming uprising and responded with violence, especially at Wounded Knee.

Americanization: Process of assimilating Native Americans into White society. Well-meaning White leaders believed this would help Native Americans become self-sufficient and opened Indian schools, but it had many negative long-term consequences. The policy was not abandoned until the 1930s.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Corps of Discovery: Group of explorers led by Lewis and Clark that crossed the new Louisiana Purchase all the way to the Pacific Ocean. They tried to establish peaceful relationships with Native Americans, created maps, and recorded the plants and animals they found.

Sacagawea: Native American woman who travelled with Lewis and Clark during their exploration of the Louisiana Purchase. Her services as an interpreter were invaluable.

Tecumseh: Native American political leader who, along with his brother The Prophet, organized a campaign to unite the tribes up and down the Mississippi River against White expansion during the early 1800s. His army was defeated at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811 and he moved to Canada.

Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna: Mexican dictator who fought against the Texans in the Texas War for Independence. He was the Mexican commander at the Battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto. Later he led Mexico against the Americans in the Mexican-American War.

Sam Houston: Former governor of Tennessee who moved to Texas and led the Texas Revolution, was the president of the Republic of Texas and first Governor of the state once Texas joined the Union. A major city was named in his honor.

James K. Polk: President elected in 1844 who championed westward expansion. He annexed Texas, led the Mexican-American War and negotiated the resolution to the boundary dispute with the United Kingdom over the Pacific Northwest.

Mountain Men: The White explorers who travelled throughout the Rocky Mountains and West in the early and mid-1800s. They were essential in the early years of westward expansion because they discovered passes, rivers, and later served as guides for miners, the army, and pioneer who settled the region.

John Colter: First of the mountain men. He was a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and was the first White person to see Yellowstone.

Jim Beckwourth: Famous African American mountain man. He lived with the Crow tribe and discovered a pass through the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California.

Forty-Niners: Nickname for the prospectors who travelled to California during the Gold Rush. Their name is derived from the first year of the migration of such miners.

Sioux: Group of related Native American tribes who lived in and around the area that is now North and South Dakota. They mounted some of the last and most fierce resistance to White expansion and the reservation system.

Sitting Bull: Sioux leader during the Indian Wars of the late-1800s. Along with Crazy Horse, he was one of the principle leaders at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Crazy Horse: Sioux leader during the Indian Wars of the late-1800s. Along with Sitting Bull, he was one of the principle leaders at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Chief Joseph: Leader of the Nez Perce in the late-1800s. He led his tribe in a failed attempt to escape across the border into Canada where he believed they would have a better chance of being allowed to continue their traditional way of life. His famous surrender message includes the lines, "My heart is sick and sad" and "I will fight no more forever."



TREATIES, LAWS & POLICIES

Louisiana Purchase: 1803 purchase of land from France by President Jefferson which doubled the size of the nation. It was an example of a loose interpretation of the Constitution despite Jefferson's preference for strict interpretation.

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Treaty signed in 1848 that formally ended the Mexican-American War. As part of the agreement, Mexico sold about half of its territory to the United States. This land, called the Mexican Cession, includes the states of California, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and portions of a few other states as well.

Pacific Railway Acts: Series of laws passed in 1862 that granted public land to railway companies in order to construct the Transcontinental Railroad. It was one of many times the federal government official supported the railroad industry in order to spur development.

Homestead Act: 1862 law that granted pioneers land in the West if they could survive and farm it. It was an important driver of migration from the East as well as inspiration for foreign immigrants seeking a better life as farmers in America.

Chinese Exclusion Act: Law passed in 1882 that ended all immigration from China and prevented any Chinese person already in the United States from becoming a citizen.

Dawes Act: 1887 law that divided Native American reservations into individually owned plots of land. It was part of the process of assimilation of Native Americans into White culture and accelerated the destruction of traditional native ways of life.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Barbed Wire: Invention that allowed ranchers and farmers to quickly build miles of fences that cows would not penetrate, thus bringing an end to the days of the cattle drives.

Transcontinental Railroad: First railroad connecting the East with California. It was built by two companies, the Union Pacific in the East and the Central Pacific in the West. The two tracks eventually met at Promontory Point in Utah in 1869.



LOCATIONS

The Alamo: Mission in San Antonio, Texas that was defended by Texans in 1836 against the Mexican Army under the command of Santa Anna at the start of the Texas Revolution. The Texans and their American allies were defeated, but they were remembered as martyrs and the loss became a source of inspiration for Texans.

Lone Star Republic: Nickname for the independent nation of Texas between 1836 and 1846.

Oregon Territory: Region that today includes the states of Oregon, Washington and the Canadian province of British Columbia. It was divided between the United States and Canada along 49th Parallel.

Rio Grande: River that divides the United States and Mexico. It flows into the Gulf of Mexico and forms most of the southern border of Texas.

Mexican Cession: The land sold to the United States by Mexico at the end of the Mexican-American War. It includes the states of California, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and portions of Colorado and Wyoming.

Sutter's Mill: Location gold was discovered in California in 1848.

Promontory Point, Utah: Spot where the tracks being laid by the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads finally met in 1869 and the golden spike was driven in, thus completing the first transcontinental railroad.

Fort Laramie: Important army fort and trading post along the Oregon Trail in Wyoming.

Reservations: Areas of land set aside by the federal government for Native American tribes. They are typically located on land that was undesirable for settlement and are more common in the West than the East.

Black Hills: Group of low mountains in South Dakota. They were sacred to some Native American tribes and were the site of an early Sioux reservation until gold was discovered there and the Native Americans were relocated.

Indian Territory: Location of a collection of Native American reservations. The tribes of the Southeast were moved there by Andrew Jackson (including the Cherokee in the Trail of Tears) and tribes of the southern plains such as the Cheyenne, Arapaho and Comanche moved there in the later 1800s. It later became the state of Oklahoma.



EVENTS

Battle of Tippecanoe: 1811 fight between American troops led by Indiana governor William Henry Harrison and a coalition of Native Americans led by Tecumseh. Harrison was victorious, thus breaking the last major coordinated effort to stop White expansion east of the Mississippi River.

Texas Revolution: War between American-born Texans and the Mexican government under the command of Santa Anna in 1835 and 1836 that resulted in independence for Texas. It was fought largely due to disagreements about culture, language, religion and especially slavery.

Mexican-American War: War between the United States and Mexico between 1846 and 1848. It was a major victory for the United States and the subsequent Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo resulted in the Mexican Cession, the land that became the modern states of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California and part of Utah.

California Gold Rush: Major migration of people to California beginning in 1849 to search for gold.

Cattle Drive: Movement of longhorn cows rounded up in Texas and driven by cowboys north to railheads in Kansas. They were common in only the 1860s and 1870s before the extension of railroads further west, but are emblematic of the West in general.

Battle of Little Bighorn: 1876 battle between the Sioux nations under the command of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse and the 7th Cavalry under the command of George Custer. It was a rare victory for the Native Americans.

Massacre at Wounded Knee: Last of the violent conflicts between government troops and Native Americans at the end of the 1800s. In December, 1890, the army massacred between 150 and 300 Lakota Sioux who had participated in the Ghost Dance.