

Westward Expansion

What did the United States look like before Westward Expansion?

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, purchased 828,000 square miles from France. This was called the Louisiana Purchase and it contained all of present-day Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, parts of Minnesota that were south of the Mississippi River, most of North Dakota, nearly all of South Dakota, northeastern New Mexico, northern Texas, the portions of Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado east of the Continental Divide, and Louisiana on both sides of the Mississippi River, including the city of New Orleans. Before the Louisiana Purchase, the United States had only 13 states.

Why did President Jefferson make such a huge purchase?

The main reason President Jefferson purchased this land is that New Orleans was the main port for trade. This port was used for storing export items (items leaving the United States), and it was used for importing goods from other countries. The United States was under constant threat of having this port taken away as a means of trading, so he thought it would be best for the country if he purchased it.

What did Thomas Jefferson decide to do with the rest of land purchased?

Since this was new land to the United States, no one really knew what was out there. President Jefferson organized an expedition to go out and explore the new land in the west. This expedition was led by Lewis and Clark and it began in 1804. Lewis and Clark kept journals of their exploration and made maps of all of the places they went to. He wanted them to study plant and animal life, Indian tribes, and the river systems. He was especially interested in finding rivers that would lead all the way to the Pacific Ocean. He had hoped he could set up more ports for exporting and importing. Lewis and Clark met Sacagawea, a Shoshone woman, while traveling. She was their guide through a great part of their journey. Lewis and Clark returned home, in 1806, with great stories of discovery. These stories made people excited about new opportunities in the west.

When did people start exploring the new land out west?

In 1845, people believed that it was their “God given right and duty” to spread out onto the new land. They called it their “Manifest Destiny.” They believed that the United States should spread all the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In 1846, the United States went to war with Mexico because they were disputing boundary lines in Texas. This was called the Mexican-American War. In 1848, Mexico signed a treaty with the United States, giving us Texas. The United States

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also acquired California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Wyoming for 15 million dollars.

How did the purchase of California affect the United States economy?

In 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California. News of this discovery spread and over 300,000 people came to California from all over the United States and the world. These gold seekers were called "forty-niners." San Francisco grew from a group of tents to a boomtown. They built roads, churches, schools, and agriculture began to flourish. Their society became advanced with the creation of laws and government. California became a state in 1850. San Francisco was also a port city, so they were able to import fine goods from other countries.

What new forms of transportation and communication helped contribute to the success of Westward Expansion?

*The Pony Express- A mail service, which began around 1860, that provided communication for people from the east coast to the west coast. Young men delivered mail from one side of the country the other side in 10 days, riding, as fast as possible, on a horse.

*Railroads- The first transcontinental railroad system in the United States was completed in 1869. It ran from the east coast to the west coast.

*Electronic Telegraph- This was one of the first greatest electrical inventions in history. People were able to communicate from far distances using Morse code, which is a system of using dots and dashes to represent letters for words.

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Questions for Reflection

1. Why did Thomas Jefferson want to make sure the United States had New Orleans?

2. What was Lewis and Clark's purpose for going on an expedition?

3. How were Lewis and Clark responsible for the fact that people wanted to travel out west?

4. What was the name of Lewis and Clark's guide?

Matching: Use the word bank to match the descriptions with the correct word.

Louisiana Purchase	Pony Express	1804
Thomas Jefferson	forty-niners	1869
Sacagawea	Manifest Destiny	Coloma
Texas	1850	

5. President Jefferson bought 828,000 square miles, also known as the _____

6. The year California became a state _____

7. Early gold seekers were called _____

8. The year Lewis and Clark set out on their expedition _____

9. Gold was discovered in this California _____

10. "God given right and duty" to spread from the east coast to west coast _____

11. The Mexican- American war was fought over boundary lines here _____

12. Mail service; young men traveled by horse _____

13. Year the first transcontinental railroad was established _____

14. The Shoshone woman who was Lewis and Clark's guide _____

15. This president made it possible for Western Expansion _____

Name _____

Date _____

Timeline: Create a timeline of events from the Louisiana Purchase to creation of the transcontinental railroad.

Year	Event

Name _____

Date _____

Answer Key:

1. The main reason President Jefferson purchased this land because New Orleans was the main port for trade. This port was used for storing export items and it was used for importing goods from other countries.
2. President Jefferson organized an expedition because no one really knew what was out west and was interested in finding rivers that would lead all the way to the Pacific Ocean. He had hoped he could set up more ports for exporting and importing.
3. Lewis and Clark returned home with great stories of discovery and these stories made people excited about new opportunities in the west.
4. Sacagawea
5. Louisiana Purchase
6. 1850
7. forty-niners
8. 1804
9. Coloma
10. Manifest Destiny
11. Texas
12. Pony Express
13. 1869
14. Sacagawea
15. Thomas Jefferson

Year	Event
1803	Louisiana Purchase
1804	Lewis and Clark Expedition
1806	Lewis and Clark returned home with exciting stories
1845	Manifest Destiny
1846	Mexican-American War
1848	Mexico signed a treaty with the United States
1848	California Gold Rush
1850	California became a state
1860	Pony Express
1869	Transcontinental Railroad