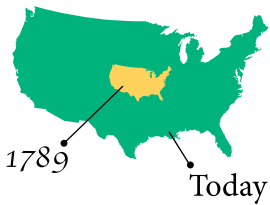




Manifest Destiny

Quite a Growth Spurt...



Size of the U.S. in 1789 is
864,746 square miles.

Size of the U.S. today is
3,531,905 square miles

Young Nation Seeks Growth Opportunity

Imagine you've just created a brand new nation. It's based on freedom and equality, where citizens control the government and are free to succeed. It's free residents believe it is the greatest nation on earth, and believe that their way of life (religion, economics, and culture) is the best. But the nation is still pretty small. If it was able to grow, more people could benefit. It could be a giant land of freedom and equality, and united in a way of life! Many thought that this nation was meant to grow... a lot.

Welcome to the concept of **manifest destiny** — the idea held by many in power that America was meant to grow so democracy and freedom could spread. Now imagine that you were part of a culture that is not included in this grand vision. That complicates it a bit, doesn't it?

All About Those Rights

When the colonists declared independence from Great Britain, they were determined to be free from abusive British rule. They demanded liberty and equality, which they saw as naturally belonging to all citizens. For them, equality meant every citizen had the same rights, instead of a few "noble" families having special privileges that "common" people did not. Liberty meant citizens had the freedom to govern themselves and to do what they wanted with their lives. These ideas only extended to the former colonists. As the power shifted to the new government, other groups became excluded: enslaved people, indigenous and free-African residents. Nevertheless, many Americans believed they were creating a nation that fulfilled a divine purpose—one that had God on their side. And they felt that God wanted them to grow and spread the ideas of the new United States.

All Citizens = All People?

Not really. In this period, only white men who owned land were granted the full rights of citizenship.

Destined to Grow?

From its very first days, the U.S. began to expand its territory. At the end of the Revolutionary War (1783), the British gave over control of enough land that America doubled in size right away. There was never any question that Americans would expand into this newly acquired land. It wasn't long before the U.S. stumbled on a chance to buy some extra territory previously occupied by France and Spain. In 1803 America doubled its size again!

Now the nation spread half way across the continent. For a few decades after this, growth basically stopped. But by the 1840s, more and more Americans moved west, and many United States leaders were itching to get their hands on more territory.

Control of Land, Control of Resource

- Minerals
- Trade routes
- Agriculture
- Lumber
- Hunting & Trapping
- Open Space

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It was during this time that newspaperman John O'Sullivan first used the phrase "manifest destiny". O'Sullivan was tired of the long debate over Texas becoming part of the United States. While Congress dragged its feet, other countries were trying to make deals with Texas. O' Sullivan said these other nations had the goal of "limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence..."

Manifest means obvious. **Destiny** means a future that has already been determined by a divine source (God). O'Sullivan was saying America was being stopped from doing what it was destined to do: take over the continent. This belief was shared by many looking to make their fortune in the new areas. But it was a threat to those cultures living on the land at the time.



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About That Whole “Overspreading” Thing...

It sounds pretty bad. O’Sullivan didn’t believe the U.S. should just attack its neighbors, take their land, and be done with it. He believed that taking over would happen naturally as Americans occupied new areas. (He didn’t stop to consider those already living on the land.) O’Sullivan expected that American settlers would move into places that Mexico owned—say, for example, California—and build new communities based on American principles. The settlers would want to keep what they built, so they would demand independence from Mexico. Because Mexico’s government was too disorganized and distant to resist, O’Sullivan believed the settlers would succeed. But that’s not quite how it happened.



National Museum of American History

American settlers began moving west even before the United States owned the land.



Library of Congress

This 1897 drawing shows Uncle Sam waiting for Cuba, Hawaii, Canada, and Central America to fall. Florida, Louisiana, Texas, California, and Alaska are already in the basket.

Expanding Expectations

Up to this point, the U.S. had only added new territory by negotiating with European countries that claimed land nearby, and additional treaties with Native peoples who lived there. One exception was Texas: There, American settlers had won independence from Mexico in 1836 and asked to become part of the United States. (This was what O’Sullivan imagined would happen elsewhere, too.) Texas became a state in 1845. By then, the American hunger for more territory had grown intense. So had tensions between the U.S. and Mexico, who owned most of the land between the U.S. and the Pacific Ocean. President James Polk had his eye on this land when he took office in 1844, and he was determined to get it for America.

Okay, Maybe We Do Mean Taking Over

When the U.S. annexed Texas, Mexico was furious. The Mexican government felt that the U.S. had violated Mexico’s borders and taken its

land. The U.S. claimed it was acting on behalf of American settlers. Even so, President Polk tried to buy additional land from Mexico, but they wouldn’t sell. So, Polk took advantage of the tension and started a war. The United States won. Mexico gave up what is now the southwestern United States—and many Mexicans living in that area lost their land to American settlers. At about the same time, America worked out a deal with Great Britain to get Oregon Territory, now the northwestern United States. By the end of the 1840s, the United States stretched from coast to coast. Ordinary Americans began pouring into the new western frontier.

Big Wins, Bigger Losses

Americans moved into the west believing they were bringing civilization to an untamed land. But thousands of Native Americans already lived on that land in civilizations that had existed for thousands of years. Most Americans of the 1800s couldn’t appreciate that. They saw Native Americans as “uncivilized”. They stood in the way of a wealth of natural resources and trade routes. To make room for “civilization,” the U.S. kept moving native tribes out of the way to smaller and smaller areas. Native Americans either lost access to their traditional lands or saw those lands destroyed by mining, logging, and over-hunting. As America’s “manifest destiny” played out, the Native American way of life was under threat.



Library of Congress

This image of Sioux/Dakota men in ceremonial dress was taken between 1890 and 1910.



Name _____

Manifest Destiny

A. Expand That Land! Read the text next to each map to see how the United States grew across the continent. On each map, shade both the new area AND all the areas you shaded before.

1783: When the Revolutionary War ended, Britain gave up territory to the U.S. **Shade** the area south of the Great Lakes and east of the Mississippi.

1803: The U.S. bought a huge area of land from France. **Shade** the large area that goes all the way from north to south. Don't shade that extra notch at the top!

1818: Okay, now you can **shade** that extra little area at the top. The U.S. traded with Britain to get that land.

1819: The U.S. made a deal with Spain to get Florida. **Shade** Florida. (You might notice that today, some of that land is not in Florida.)

1845: The U.S. annexed Texas. Back then, Texas claimed a bigger area than it has today. **Shade** the big blob that looks like Texas with a chimney.



1853: Now you can **shade** that little slice on the Mexico border. The U.S. bought that area from Mexico. The sale was called the Gadsden Purchase.

1848: After the Mexican-American war, Mexico gave up a million acres to the U.S. **Shade** the big area below the Oregon Territory. **Do not shade** that little slice on the Mexico border!

1846: The U.S. settled a dispute with Britain and got the Oregon Territory. **Shade** the area in the northwest corner.

B. Technology Time. Why did the U.S. expand so quickly? One huge factor was technology. The first half of the 1800s saw huge advances in transportation and communication. For each tech "upgrade" think of how it helped U.S. territorial expansion.

Before 1800	By the 1850's	Impact on Expansion
Self-powered long boats	Steam- powered paddle boats	
Hand-written letters	Telegraphed messages	
Horse-drawn carriages	Railroads	
Small printing presses	Large scale printing presses	



Manifest Destiny

C. That 'Manifest Destiny Attitude. Even before there was a name for it, people who believed in "Manifest Destiny" had a distinct way of thinking. Read the excerpts and answer the questions.

Excerpt I

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America ... that for the purpose of providing against the further decline and final extinction of the Indian tribes ... and for introducing among them the habits and arts of civilization, the President of the United States ... is hereby authorized ... to employ capable persons of good moral character, to instruct them in the mode of agriculture suited to their situation; and for teaching their children in reading, writing, and arithmetic...

— from "An Act Making Provision for the Civilization of the Indian Tribes Adjoining the Frontier Settlements" (March 3, 1819)

Excerpt II

What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization and religion?

— from President Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress 'On Indian Removal' (1830)

Excerpt III

[T]he continent is ours... [A]ll the lines from the beginning have been converging toward this nation... [W]hen the choice seed was planted on these shores, it was in reality the great stride of the human race onward... [I]t is simply the plain sober fact that the forward thought of the world in civilization, in government, in liberty, in education and in religion is on this continent.

— from *The Home Missionary* (1867)

1. One word appears in all three excerpts.

Circle it in each excerpt and write it on this line: _____

2. There are 12 words in the puzzle that describe things people valued. Use all three excerpts to help you find them!

S	L	R	P	S	F	G	C	T	Q	M	C
L	T	Q	E	Z	M	I	P	R	I	I	T
I	B	N	V	L	T	R	U	A	V	P	N
B	U	F	E	I	I	B	A	I	R	O	E
E	G	H	E	M	D	G	L	F	I	D	M
R	C	S	E	L	E	I	I	T	K	U	N
T	V	J	I	I	Z	V	A	O	T	I	R
Y	H	Z	G	A	O	C	O	N	N	S	E
E	R	U	T	L	U	C	I	R	G	A	V
U	V	I	O	D	Q	O	N	X	P	L	O
K	O	A	E	S	N	W	O	T	I	M	G
N	I	N	D	U	S	T	R	Y	T	D	I

3. Based on what President Jackson *did* value, what do you think was his problem with "a country covered with forests"?

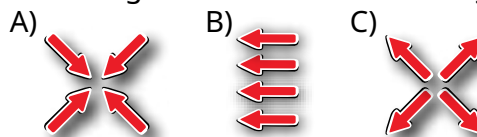
4. Does it sound like President Jackson had respect for Native Americans?

Box the evidence for your answer.

Yes

No

5. Which diagram shows lines "converging"?



6. Manifest Destiny was seen as progress. Underline two phrases in the *Home Missionary* excerpt that mean *progress*.