



GeoCivics Course: Westward Expansion
through the lens of Indigenous People
Westward Expansion

The Westward Expansion



Westward Expansion and Native Americans --

<https://www.history.com/history-at-home-westward-expansion-native-americans>

Think like a Geographer!

Think about gathering factual evidence; what quantitative and qualitative skills and approaches (including observing, collecting and analyzing geolocated data) would you utilize? How could you increase the use of primary or secondary sources of evidence, including artwork and photographs?

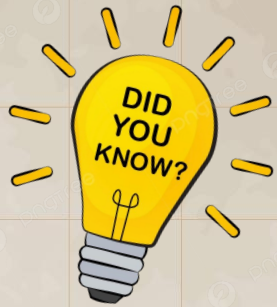


✓ Learning Objectives ✓

Participants will be able to describe/discuss:

- how a growing population affected Westward Expansion
- the Louisiana Purchase
- the purpose of the Lewis and Clark Expedition
- the concept of Manifest Destiny
- the annexation of the Republic of Texas
- The Oregon Treaty
- The Mexican-American War & Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
- How the discovery of gold *and* silver influenced Westward Expansion
- The impact the Civil War had on Westward Expansion
- How the Homestead Act influenced Westward Expansion
- Extermination of the buffalo
- The dispossession of tribal lands
- How current issues on native lands reflect the initial treatment of indigenous communities
- Indian boarding schools
- The Trail of Tears
- The effect of Manifest Destiny on US-Indian relations
- The Dawes Act
- How the new inventions and transportation methods created during the Industrial Revolution impacted American life
- How the Industrial Revolution influenced Westward Expansion
- How new technology impacted Westward Expansion

"Without the participation of informed and responsible citizens, a democratic republic cannot and does not function, nor can it make progress toward its ideals. Students must show an understanding of not only American government but also the workings of civil society. There is a need for sustained and systematic attention to objective information on how effectively we are educating our children in civics. Geography presents a framework for addressing local, regional, national, and global questions. As the world becomes more interconnected through technological advancement and shared concerns about economic, political, social, and environmental issues, the need for geographic knowledge increases. Knowing, understanding, and applying geography's content are essential to responsible citizenship, because geography illuminates causes and effects of physical and human events. -- *The Nation's Report Card - 2018*



Did you know that learning about Westward Expansion through the lens of indigenous people is an aspect of cultural geography? Yup, cultural geography is important because its research and knowledge explains why people and societies act and make decisions the way they do.

A large, stylized speech bubble with a red background and a black outline. The words "GOOD CITIZEN" are written inside in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a thick black outline. The bubble is positioned on the right side of the page, overlapping a faint world map background.

First, take a look at the painting, REALLY look...

- What is the first thing you observe?
- What can you infer from your observations?
- When do you think this painting was created?
- What do you think the woman in the center of the painting represents?
- How do you think the artist felt about westward expansion?
- How do you think the artist felt about indigenous peoples' land claims?
- To what extent does this painting reflect a single story? ***(Think about the single story video & your reflection.)***



<https://2012english120.wordpress.com/2012/11/30/stabbing-westward-an-analysis-of-john-gasts-american-progress/> -John Gast

Overview

Now...what IS Westward Expansion?

"The expansion of the United States into the territory west of the Mississippi River began with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. President Thomas Jefferson nearly doubled the size of the nation by negotiating a price of \$15 million to purchase 828,800 square miles from France, including all or part of 14 current states. In 1804, Jefferson sent an expedition led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the area. The three-year expedition produced new understanding of the geography and resources of the western part of the continent. In the 1830s and 1840s, "manifest destiny", the idea that the United States was destined to expand across the entire continent, was used to promote further territorial expansion. **And the nation expanded quickly:**

In 1845 the United States annexed Texas;

In 1846 the Oregon Treaty ended British claims to Oregon Territory;

In 1848, following the Mexican-American War, Mexico ceded much of the Southwest to the United States;

In 1853 the United States bought an additional tract of land from Mexico.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana_Purchase#/media/File:Louisiana_Purchase.png -William Morris



Estimated Viewing: 13 Minutes





The Homestead Act of 1862 provided that any citizen who had never borne arms against the U.S. government could claim 160 acres of government land as long as they cultivated their plot -- PBS

<https://www.pbs.org/video/homestead-act-spurs-westward-expansion/>

States joined the Union at a relatively fast pace: California became a state in 1850 and Oregon in 1859, Nevada in 1864, Nebraska in 1867, Colorado in 1876, South and North Dakota, Montana, and Washington in 1889, Wyoming and Idaho in 1890, and Utah in 1896. As new towns like Denver and Phoenix sprang up in these new states, established towns and cities grew to accommodate the new industries and new populations that westward expansion brought with it.

A number of factors fueled migration west. Trappers, settlers, and miners headed West from the eastern United States prior to the Civil War. The Homestead Act, passed in 1862, allowed settlers to claim 160 acres of land for free. Another important factor was completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869; the railroad led to much more rapid western migration and also facilitated economic development.

In looking at the history of the American West, it is important to keep in mind the myths that arose around the settling of the West in the second half of the nineteenth century. The influential historian Frederick Jackson Turner described a uniquely American personality forged by the experience of taming the wilderness and critical to the success and growth of the United States. That view of the West as a frontier where heroic white settlers and cowboys struggled to bring civilization to a savage land framed popular and scholarly thinking for years to come.

More recently, however, historians have questioned the notion of the frontier. Instead, they have argued that the nineteenth-century West was a crossroads of cultures. The trans-Mississippi West was home to countless Native American communities. The lifeways of the Native American groups varied considerably. Some with nomadic lifestyles required large amounts of rangeland to maintain their families; other groups lived in settled communities, where they farmed and raised livestock brought to the West by the Spanish. The cultural diversity was heightened by the addition of tens of thousands of Native Americans forced west from the eastern areas of the United States.

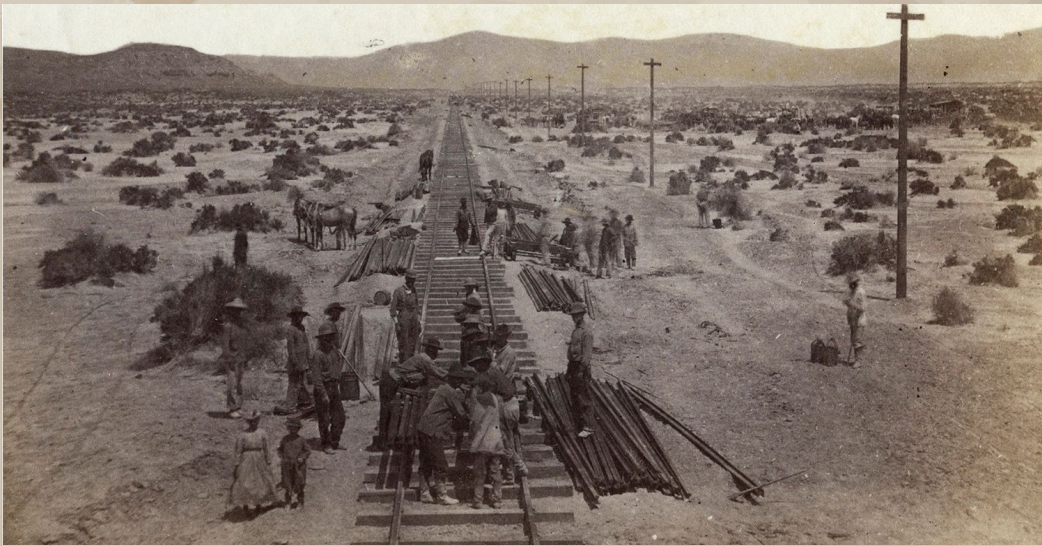
Spain ruled what is today the southwestern United States between 1598 and 1821; it used land grants to promote settlement and protect this remote region of its empire. Spanish policy was to give settlers free land owned by the government. The Republic of Mexico followed many of the same policies when it governed the Southwest between 1821 and 1848.

Thus, when white settlers began pouring into the West, they were entering a region in which indigenous peoples and Spanish settlers had been living for hundreds of years. Nor was east the only direction from which settlers came into the American West.

African Americans came from the southeast, Spanish settlers came from Mexico in the south, and workers came from the west, across the Pacific from China.

What do YOU think?
*Was Westward Expansion a
result of cultural
intersections?*





Railroad workers construct a section of the First Transcontinental Railroad on the Humboldt Plains of Nevada. (Image credit: Alfred A. Hart Photographs, 1862-1869, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries)

The hope for economic advancement that brought white settlers to the West also brought workers from Asia. **Chinese immigrants worked in mining, ran small businesses, and helped build railroads across the West**; however, they were often met with hostility and violent attacks when they attempted to settle into communities.

Expansion in the American West continues today, as its population centers continue to expand into even the most remote areas of the region. Cultural encounters also continue to have an impact on everyday life in the United States, and may prove to be among the most important legacies of the great era of westward expansion." --
Library of Congress



Factors that Influenced Westward Expansion - Part 1: 1803-1845



Overview



NOTE: the following information is what is *traditionally* taught in our classrooms, mostly via text books.

Think back to the Single Story Module and the blind man...

Who wrote the texts? Do you think there could be bias? A single story? What aspects of the Expansion could be missing or described inaccurately?

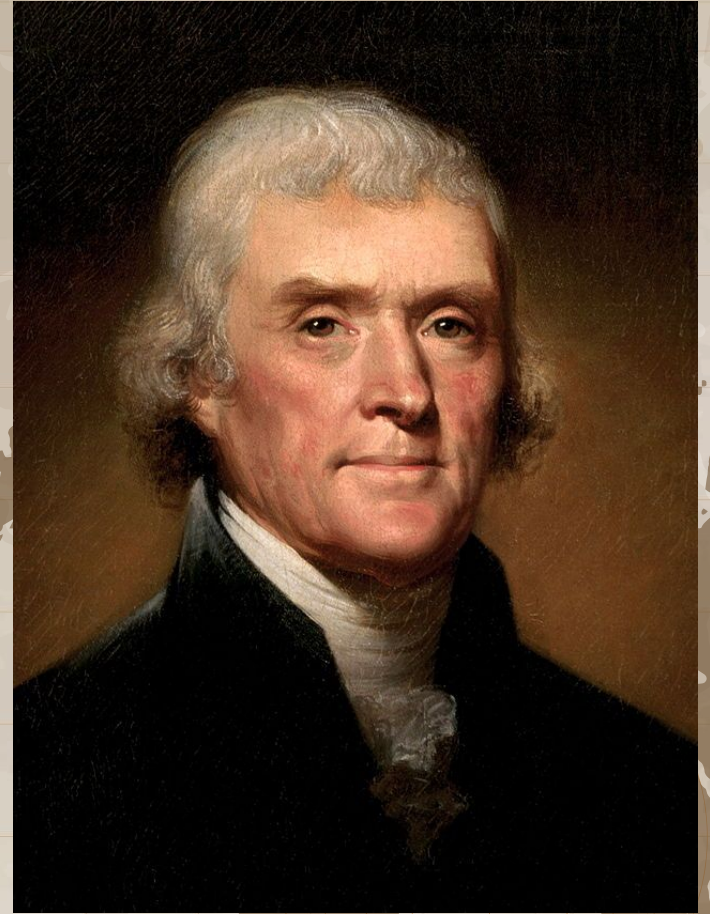
How did the expansion impact the indigenous people? The pioneers? Did they have similar or different experiences?



Now that we have taken a quick peek at what Westward Expansion IS, let's take a deeper dive and find out what factors led to and influenced the Expansion.

"When Thomas Jefferson imagined the ideal environment for the republic to thrive, he pictured a country made up of small farms. Independent farmers would make an honest living tilling the soil, and in doing so, they would become virtuous citizens. Before the Civil War, the Free-Soil movement and the Republican Party embraced this idea for the American West: a territory reserved for small white farmers, unchallenged by the wealthy plantation owners who could buy up vast tracts of land and employ slave labor. (The indigenous residents of the West did not figure into their vision, except as obstacles to remove).

During the Civil War, the Republican-controlled Congress worked to make the dream of a farmer's paradise a reality by passing the Homestead Act, which granted up to 160 acres of western land to loyal citizens. The US government also helped westward expansion by granting land to railroad companies and extending telegraph wires across the country.



Thomas Jefferson

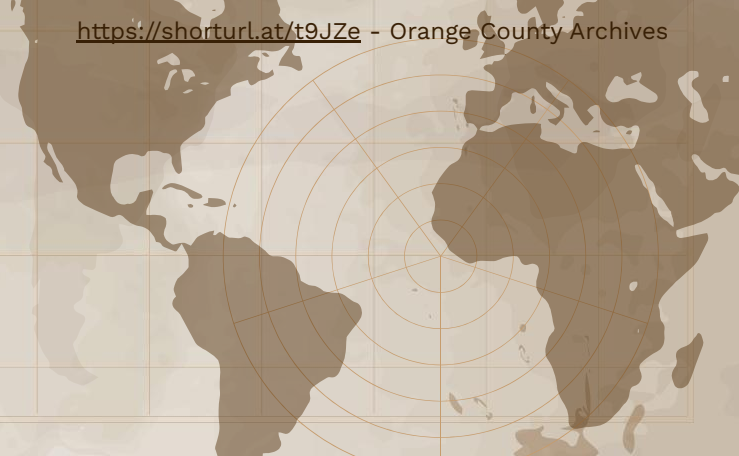
After the Civil War, the dream of independent farms remained, but the reality was more complex. Just as big business was coming to dominate the factories of eastern cities, so too were powerful corporate interests beginning to elbow out the independent farmers, miners, and cowboys who had built the image of the West as the land of opportunity for the rugged individual. A variety of factors enticed American settlers and immigrants to head west in the late nineteenth century. Chief among these was the availability of cheap land for farming, logging, and ranching. Hundreds of thousands of people obtained land through the Homestead Act: through it, the US government transferred more than 270 million acres of public lands into private hands.

The discovery of precious metals and minerals also drew people to the West. Miners discovered gold, silver, and copper in several western states. The discovery of silver in the Comstock Lode in Nevada in 1858 prompted the largest rush of prospectors since the California gold rush a decade earlier. Hordes of miners looking to strike it rich created short-lived “boomtowns” that swiftly turned into abandoned “ghost towns” when the communities exhausted the easily-accessible minerals. By the 1880s, only large mining corporations had the money and machinery necessary to undertake the difficult work of extracting ore from deep in the earth.



Miner on the Trinity River | circa 1850s

<https://shorturl.at/t9JZe> - Orange County Archives



But the greatest contributor to the development of the West was the railroad. Eager to promote trade and transportation, federal, state, and local governments granted land to railroad companies. The companies used that land to triple the miles of railroad track in the United States between 1860 and 1880, all while turning a tidy profit selling excess land to settlers and speculators.

The railroads opened up the West not only to settlement but to the world market, making it possible to ship meat and crops to distant cities and even across oceans. To do so, the railroads even transformed time itself: in 1883 the railroad companies coordinated their schedules by dividing the United States into four time zones, which are still the standard today." -- *Khan Academy*

**People boarding a train at the
Shawnee depot, circa late
1800s - DPLA**

<https://pclha.cvlcollections.org/items/show/869>

- Park County Digital Archive



Westward Expansion & Manifest Destiny



Estimated Viewing: 5 Minutes



Learn & Practice



Before getting started, let's find our place in history...

"In 1795, Spain and the United States developed the Pinckney Treaty to resolve the conflict the countries were having over the use of the Mississippi River to transport goods from New Orleans. This weakened the Spanish control of the area, leading to the United States' thought that westward expansion could be obtainable in the future.

The Louisiana situation reached a crisis point in October 1802 when Spain's King Charles IV signed a decree transferring the territory to France and the Spanish agent in New Orleans, acting on orders from the Spanish court, revoked Americans' access to the port's warehouses. These moves prompted outrage in the United States."-- *Monticello.org*



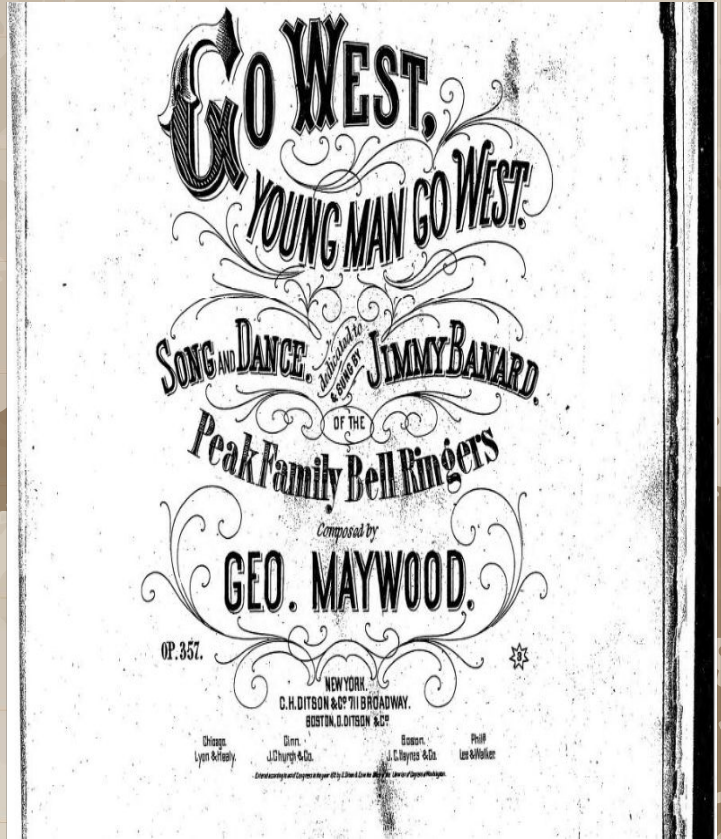
What Factors Influenced Westward Expansion?

Louisiana Purchase - 1803

"The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 brought into the United States about 828,000 square miles of territory from France, thereby doubling the size of the young republic. What was known at the time as the Louisiana Territory stretched from the Mississippi River in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west and from the Gulf of Mexico in the south to the Canadian border in the north. Part or all of 15 states were eventually created from the land deal, which is considered one of the most important achievements of Thomas Jefferson's presidency." -- *History.com*

Population Growth

"The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 intensified American migration to the west that was already well underway. Anglo-American settlement in the 18th century had largely been confined to the eastern seaboard. It made its boldest inroads where rivers allowed easy internal transportation. As a result the chief population centers of early North America were clustered on the coast or along its major inland waterways....Long before newspaper editors such as JOHN SOULE and HORACE GREELEY were urging readers to "GO WEST, YOUNG MAN," Americans were doing exactly that." -- *ushistory.org*



Go west, young man, go west
Record created through migration from the
Performing Arts Encyclopedia Database

Population growth & movement

Watch human population grow from 1 CE to present and see projected growth in under six minutes. One dot = 1 million people. © Population Connection, 2015.

This is a great tool to use with students to demonstrate how rapidly the global population is growing, and where they settled throughout history.

- *Why are people located where they are?*
- *How did they get there?*
- *When did they arrive?*



Estimated Viewing: 6 Minutes
--Population Education

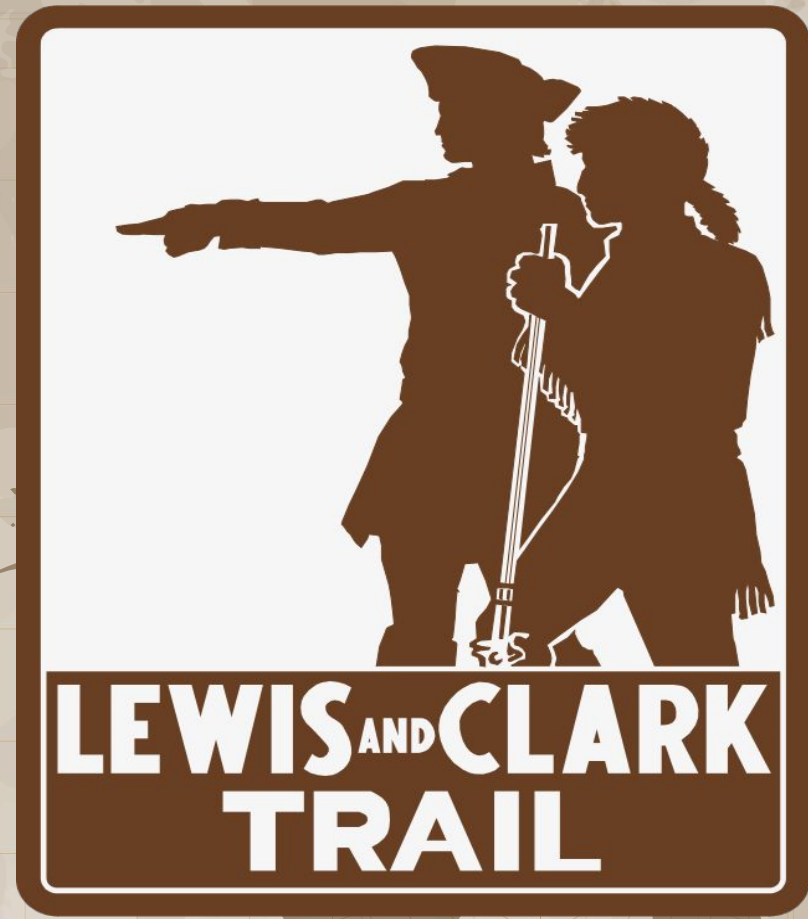
Lewis and Clark Explore the West - 1804

"The Lewis and Clark Expedition began in 1804, when President Thomas Jefferson tasked Meriwether Lewis with exploring lands west of the Mississippi River that comprised the Louisiana Purchase. Lewis chose William Clark as his co-leader for the mission. The excursion lasted over two years: Along the way they confronted harsh weather, unforgiving terrain, treacherous waters, injuries, starvation, disease and both friendly and hostile Native Americans. Nevertheless, the approximately 8,000-mile journey was deemed a huge success and provided new geographic, ecological and social information about previously uncharted areas of North America." -- *History.com*

[Learn about the effect population had on the Expansion](#)

[View interesting facts from the second US census, held on Aug. 4, 1800](#)

Check out the DOODLEY! [Geographic Theme: Developing an Awareness of Place](#)



Route marker for the Lewis and Clark Trail. *Courtesy Montana Department of Transportation*

Manifest Destiny - 1830's and 40's

"Manifest Destiny, a phrase coined in 1845, is the idea that the United States is destined—by God, its advocates believed—to expand its dominion and spread democracy and capitalism across the entire North American continent. The philosophy drove 19th-century U.S. territorial expansion and was used to justify the forced removal of Native Americans and other groups from their homes. The rapid expansion of the United States intensified the issue of slavery as new states were added to the Union, leading to the outbreak of the Civil War." -- *History.com*

United States annexed Texas - 1845

"On June 23, 1845, a joint resolution of the Congress of Texas voted in favor of annexation by the United States. The leaders of the republic first voted for annexation in 1836, soon after gaining independence from Mexico, but the U.S. Congress was unwilling to admit another state that permitted slavery. Sam Houston, commander of the Texas army during the fight for independence from Mexico and the first president of the Republic of Texas, was a strong advocate of annexation." -- *Library of Congress*



Sam Houston, commander of the Texas army during the fight for independence from Mexico and the first president of the Republic of Texas, was a strong advocate of annexation.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2021669463/>

- Library of Congress



Tools & Tips



- [National Park Service](#) A resource article titled, *The Expedition's Impact on Indigenous Americans*.
- [National Gallery of Art](#) A resource that looks into the role that artists played when it came to shaping the public's understanding of the western part of the United States.
- [PBS Interactive Westward Expansion map](#) A resource that allows you to view native tribes, geologic features, and precipitation from 1790 to 1850.
- [Library of Congress](#) Student discovery set of free eBooks on the Industrial Revolution.
- [National Gallery of Art](#) A classroom activity focusing on the multiple viewpoints of the Industrial Revolution.
- [The Ohio State University, History Teaching Institute](#) Classroom activities on teaching the Industrial Revolution.
- [C3 Teachers](#) A high school level lesson on Industrialization.
- [PBS Learning Media](#) Teaching instruction, activities, and videos for 3rd -12th grade.
- [Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool](#) - Library of Congress
- [Frontier Museum Virtual Field Trip](#) Visit the museum from the classroom and explore life in the old world.





Tools & Tips



- [Library of Congress](#) Firsthand accounts from Americans as they traveled west from 1750 to 1920. Great for providing primary sources to students!
- **Doodley Geographic Concept:** [Push/Pull Factors](#)
- History Channel A resource with various articles on the western Expansion from different perspectives.
- National Archives Primary resources for teaching Westward Expansion.
- National Geographic Western Expansion Maps, articles, and encyclopedic entries for all grade levels!
- PBS Interactive Westward Expansion map A resource that allows you to view native tribes, geologic features, and precipitation from 1860 to 1890. The Indian Removal Act
- The Indian Appropriations Act
- A primary source that shares accounts of families and family members who either experienced the Trail of Tears or are passing on the stories from their elders.
- Native American Rights Fund Links to an external site. "Since 1970, the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) has provided legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide who might otherwise have gone without adequate representation."
- Library of Congress Links to an external site. A resource that provides additional information on Native American Boarding Schools. [Westward Expansion](#)



Factors that Influenced Westward Expansion - Part 2: 1846 - 1893



Overview



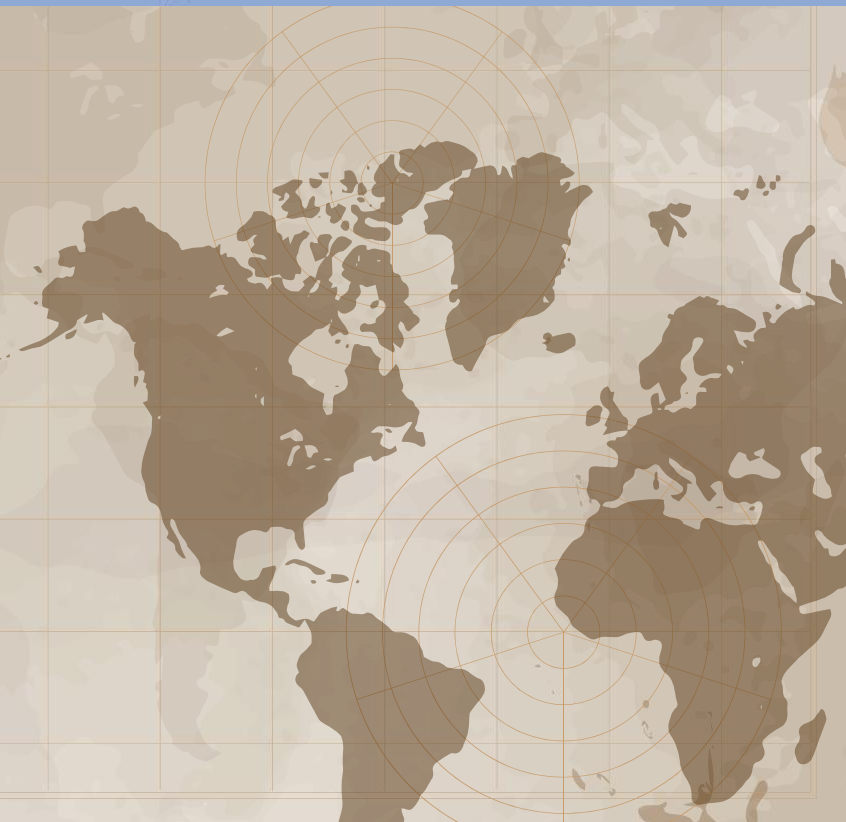
What Factors Influenced Westward Expansion?

Technology

This factor is *extremely important* and is covered in the next section.

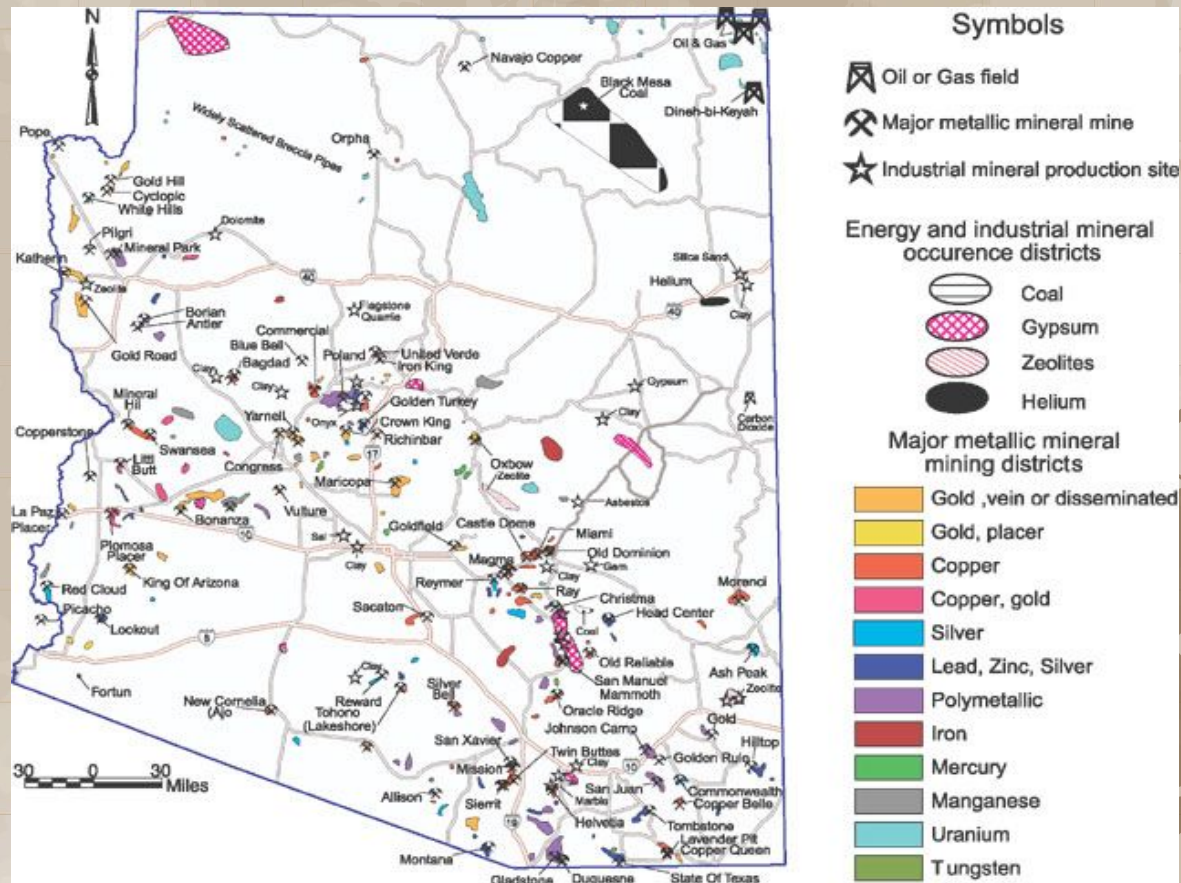
Oregon Treaty - 1846

"Far to the north and west of Texas, the United States and several other nations vied for the Oregon Country: the land north of California and west of the Rocky Mountains. The territory was variously claimed from the sixteenth century by Spain, Russia, Britain, and the United States. However, by the mid-1820s, only the American and British claims endured. The two nations agreed in 1818 to a "joint occupation" of Oregon in which citizens of both countries could settle; this arrangement lasted until 1846." -- *Smithsonian Education*



Think like a Geographer!

Think about drawing maps and plans at a range of scales, using symbols, keys and scales to select and use appropriate graphical techniques to present evidence on maps and diagrams.



Map of mines in Arizona -- *Arizona Geographic Alliance*



Learn & Practice



The Mexican-American War & Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo - 1848

"The Mexican-American War (1846-1848) marked the first U.S. armed conflict chiefly fought on foreign soil. It pitted a politically divided and militarily unprepared Mexico against the expansionist-minded administration of U.S. President James K. Polk, who believed the United States had a "manifest destiny" to spread across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. A border skirmish along the Rio Grande started off the fighting and was followed by a series of U.S. victories. When the dust cleared, Mexico had lost about one-third of its territory, including nearly all of present-day California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, that brought an official end to the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), was signed on February 2, 1848, at Guadalupe Hidalgo, a city north of the capital where the Mexican government had fled with the advance of U.S. forces. By its terms, Mexico ceded 55 percent of its territory, including parts of present-day Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah, to the United States. Mexico relinquished all claims to Texas, and recognized the Rio Grande as the southern boundary with the United States." -- *History.com*



There's Gold (and silver) in them thar hills!" - 1849-59



Estimated Viewing: 2 Minutes

BONANZA! That was the exclamation when a large vein of valuable ore was discovered. Thousands of optimistic Americans and even a few foreigners dreamed of finding a bonanza and retiring at a very young age. Ten years after the 1849 CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH, new deposits were gradually found throughout the West. Colorado yielded gold and silver at PIKES PEAK in 1859 and LEADVILLE IN 1873. NEVADA claimed COMSTOCK LODGE, the largest of American silver strikes.

From COEUR D'ALENE in Idaho to TOMBSTONE in Arizona, BOOM TOWNS flowered across the American West. They produced not only gold and silver, but zinc, copper, and lead, all essential for the eastern Industrial Revolution. Soon the West was filled with ne'er-do-wells hoping to strike it rich." -- *ushistory.org*

[Learn more about the mining boom](#)

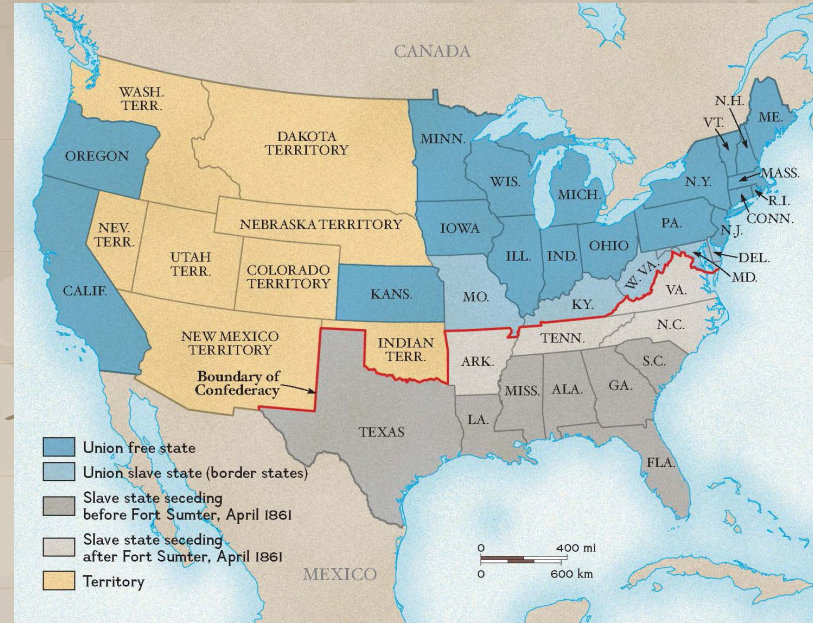
Check out the DOODLEY: [Understanding Human and Environmental Interaction](#)



What about the Civil War? - 1861

"The Civil War in the United States began in 1861, after decades of simmering tensions between northern and southern states over slavery, states' rights and westward expansion. The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 caused seven southern states to secede and form the Confederate States of America; four more states soon joined them. The War Between the States, as the Civil War was also known, ended in Confederate surrender in 1865. The conflict was the costliest and deadliest war ever fought on American soil, with some 620,000 of 2.4 million soldiers killed, millions more injured and much of the South left in ruin." -- *History.com*

[Go deeper into the Civil War](#)



<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/union-confederacy/>

What was the impact of the Civil War on Westward Expansion?

"The Civil War started in 1861 and went on until 1865. With federal resources focused on waging the war in the east, the Confederacy attempted to claim lands west of the Mississippi to further their agenda and gain slave states. This led to the Homestead Act of 1862, which allowed people to venture west with the promise of obtaining 160 acres of land. The Homestead Act served a few purposes. For many Americans, it was an opportunity to own land and build a future. Lincoln and his government saw it as a chance to populate the West with people who supported Lincoln's pro-Union, antislavery causes." *The Homestead Act and Westward Expansion: Setting the Western Frontier, Irene Harris*

**Estimated
Viewing: 2
Minutes**



"President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act on May 20, 1862. On January 1, 1863, Daniel Freeman made the first claim under the Act, which gave citizens or future citizens up to 160 acres of public land provided they live on it, improve it, and pay a small registration fee. The Government granted more than 270 million acres of land while the law was in effect." --
Library of Congress

Do a deeper dive into the Homestead Act of 1862.

Right: Daniel Freeman's Homestead Application - Library of Congress

Application } Homestead
No. 1. } Land Office
Brownville N.T. January 1st 1863

I Daniel Freeman of Gage County Nebraska Territory
do hereby apply to enter under the provisions of the
act of Congress approved May 20th 1862 entitled an act
to Secure Homesteads to actual settlers on the Public Domain
the South half of N. 1/4 of N. 1/4 of N. 1/4 of N. 1/4 of N. 1/4 Sec. 26.
in Township ~~34~~²¹ N. in Range Five East. containing 160 acres
Having filed my Pre-emption Declaration there to on
the Eighth day of September 1862
Daniel Freeman

Land office at:
Brownville N.T. January 1st 1863

I Richard F. Barrett Register of the Land Office do
hereby certify that the above application is for unswamped
Lands of the Class which the applicant is legally entitled to enter
under the Homestead act. of May 20th 1862 and that there is no
Prior valid adverse Right to the same

Richard F. Barrett
Register

New Technologies that Influenced Westward Expansion



Overview



First things first: Let's look at the Industrial Revolution

"It has been said that the Industrial Revolution was the most profound revolution in human history, because of its sweeping impact on people's daily lives. The term "industrial revolution" is a succinct catchphrase to describe a historical period, starting in 18th-century Great Britain, where the pace of change appeared to speed up. This acceleration in the processes of technical innovation brought about an array of new tools and machines. It also involved more subtle practical improvements in various fields affecting labor, production, and resource use. The word "technology" (which derives from the Greek word *techne*, meaning art or craft) encompasses both of these dimensions of innovation.

The technological revolution, and that sense of ever-quickenning change, began much earlier than the 18th century and has continued all the way to the present day. Perhaps what was most unique about the Industrial Revolution was its merger of technology with industry. Key inventions and innovations served to shape virtually every existing sector of human activity along industrial lines, while also creating many new industries." -- *Smithsonian*



Estimated Viewing: 18 Minutes

How did the Industrial Revolution influence expansion?

"In the decades following the Civil War, the United States emerged as an industrial giant. Old industries expanded and many new ones, including petroleum refining, steel manufacturing, and electrical power, emerged. Railroads expanded significantly, bringing even remote parts of the country into a national market economy.

Industrial growth transformed American society. It produced a new class of wealthy industrialists and a prosperous middle class. It also produced a vastly expanded blue collar working class. The labor force that made industrialization possible was made up of millions of newly arrived immigrants and even larger numbers of migrants from rural areas. American society became more diverse than ever before.

Not everyone shared in the economic prosperity of this period. Many workers were typically unemployed at least part of the year, and their wages were relatively low when they did work. This situation led many workers to support and join labor unions. Meanwhile, farmers also faced hard times as technology and increasing production led to more competition and falling prices for farm products. Hard times on farms led many young people to move to the city in search of better job opportunities.

Estimated Viewing: 2 Minutes



Americans who were born in the 1840s and 1850s would experience enormous changes in their lifetimes. Some of these changes resulted from a sweeping technological revolution. Their major source of light, for example, would change from candles, to kerosene lamps, and then to electric light bulbs. They would see their transportation evolve from walking and horsepower to steam-powered locomotives, to electric trolley cars, to gasoline-powered automobiles. Born into a society in which the vast majority of people were involved in agriculture, they experienced an industrial revolution that radically changed the ways millions of people worked and where they lived. They would experience the migration of millions of people from rural America to the nation's rapidly growing cities." --

Library of Congress





Learn & Practice



In what ways did new technologies influence Westward Expansion?



Estimated Viewing: 12 Minutes



"The building of the transcontinental railroad opened up the American West to more rapid development. With the completion of the track, the travel time for making the 3,000-mile journey across the United States was cut from a matter of months to under a week. Connecting the two American coasts made the economic export of Western resources to Eastern markets easier than ever before. The railroad also facilitated westward expansion, escalating conflicts between Native American tribes and settlers who now had easier access to new territories." -- *History.com*

The first transcontinental telegraph, which followed the path of the Oregon-California Trail through Mitchell Pass in what is now Scotts Bluff National Monument, enabled nearly instantaneous electronic communication across North America for the first time. Telegraphy was the first form of electronic communication and contributed to the progression of telecommunication systems which have become a significant part of life in the 21st century. -- *National Park Service*



Note the telegraph lines that could be seen in Mitchell Pass in 1866.

William Henry Jackson from the Scotts Bluff National Monument Collection (SCBL-27).

International Morse Code

1. The length of a dot is one unit.
2. A dash is three units.
3. The space between parts of the same letter is one unit.
4. The space between letters is three units.
5. The space between words is seven units.

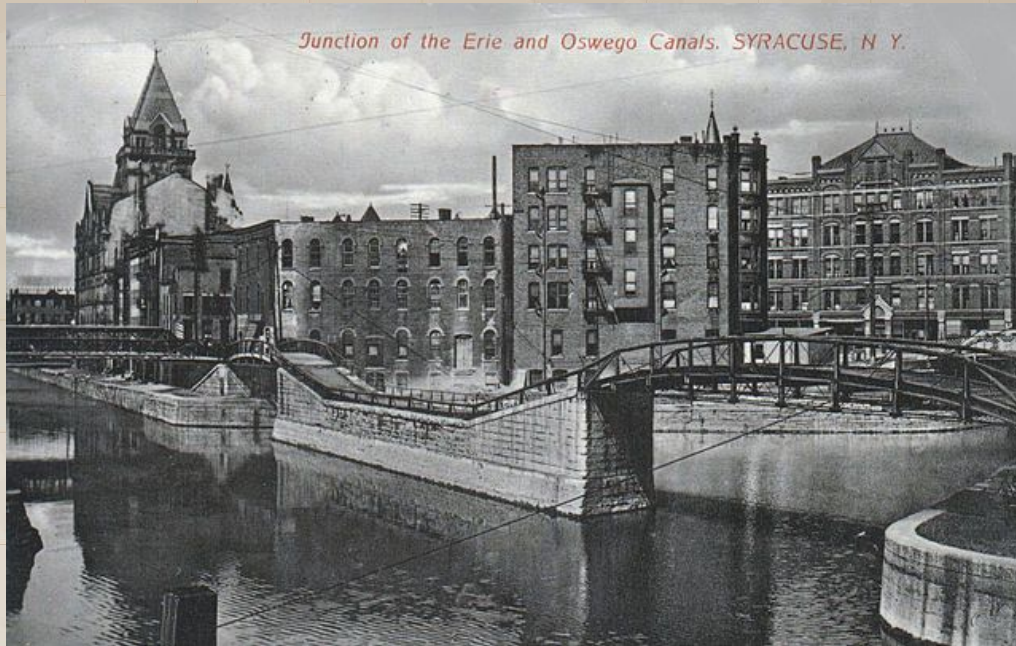
A ● —
B — ● ● ●
C — ● — ●
D — ● ●
E ●
F ● ● — ●
G — — ●
H ● ● ● ●
I ● ●
J ● — — —
K — ● —
L ● — ● ●
M — —
N — ●
O — — —
P ● — — ●
Q — — ● —
R ● — ●
S ● ● ●
T —

U ● ● —
V ● ● ● —
W ● — —
X — ● ● —
Y — ● — —
Z — — ● ●

1 ● — — — —
2 ● ● — — —
3 ● ● ● — —
4 ● ● ● ● —
5 ● ● ● ● ●
6 — ● ● ● ●
7 — — ● ● ●
8 — — — ● ●
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"Inventor Samuel Morse developed the telegraph system. Morse's system sent out a signal in a series of dots and dashes, each combination representing one letter of the alphabet ("Morse code"). The inventor submitted a patent for his device, which he called "The American Recording Electro-Magnetic Telegraph" in 1837. In 1838, he sought a congressional appropriation to fund its expansion by performing the first public demonstration of his machine for Congress. Despite an impressive exhibition of the new technology, Morse did not receive the funding he requested until the 27th Congresses (1841-1843). Once Morse's system was installed in the Capitol, Congress found the telegraph to be an indispensable tool. At first the telegraph connected only Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, MD; gradually lines were extended to other large east coast cities. With the westward expansion of the country and the addition of new territories to the union, improved communication became a necessity. The telegraph revolutionized the way Congress corresponded with the nation. During the Civil War reports flashed from the battlefields assisted the federal government as it monitored and tracked troop developments. It was the first time that instant battle reports were provided to officials in Washington, D.C. Telegraph lines later linked the Capitol building to the White House and reporters to their respective newspapers." -- *US House of Representatives*

"More than two hundred years ago, it took two weeks to travel from Albany to Buffalo. Terrain was rough, shipping costs were high, and merchants had to contend with ox-drawn wagons. But on July 4, 1817, construction began on something that would change that long trip—and American commerce—forever. When the Erie Canal opened eight years later, it took only five days to travel between the two cities, and freight rates fell 90 percent. From a corridor for ideas to a hotspot for disease transmission, the canal left a profound mark on American history." -- *Smithsonian*



- Postcard from Onondaga County
Public Library collection

Westward Expansion Impacts on Indigenous Peoples



Overview



We have all seen similar images, right? The first Thanksgiving; a happy gathering of indigenous peoples and the pilgrims.

How many of us celebrate in our classrooms with decorations, costumes, and plays? Did you know this picture represents a continuous false narrative of what really happened during the Thanksgiving era? *Do our texts gloss over important facts? Present historical inaccuracies? Are we teaching our students a single story?* In truth, massacres, disease and American Indian tribal politics are what shaped the Pilgrim-Indian alliance at the root of the holiday.

The Myths of the Thanksgiving Story and the Lasting Damage They Imbue



THE FIRST THANKSGIVING 1621 Painted by Jean Ferris in 1899

PLEASE READ

IMPORTANT NOTE: Before we get started on this final section, keep in mind that teaching about the impact the expansion had on indigenous peoples means tackling tough subjects such as genocide and the abuse of Indigenous children in boarding and residential schools. These topics are a necessary part of the curriculum if we are to make sense of the world today, but they can also raise further questions and difficult conversations for some students.

In preparation for classroom instruction, we strongly suggest you read:

[A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching the Colonization of the Americas](#) (Start at top of page)



Students and staff, Hope Indian School, Springfield, South - May 1895
Photographer: Burnell, B. W.

"From the earliest days of European colonization of the New World, relations between white Europeans and Native Americans were plagued by violent competition for land and natural resources. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 authorized the forced removal of numerous Indian tribes from their ancestral lands in the Southeast to what was designated "Indian territory" west of the Mississippi River. The Cherokee nation was subject to a brutal mass migration that came to be known as the Trail of Tears.

Some tribes fiercely resisted the forced relocations, and Native Americans and the US Army fought many battles in the East. The Seminoles of Florida, for instance, refused to leave their lands, resulting in the Second Seminole War, which lasted from 1835 to 1842 and has been described as "the longest and most costly of the Indian conflicts of the United States. Despite some major Indian victories in battle, the US Army ultimately succeeded in crushing this resistance, massacring or forcing into hiding those Indians who refused to march westward.

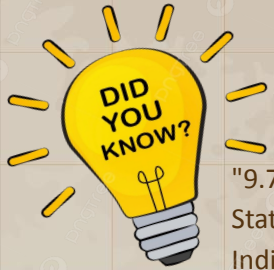


The Indian Appropriations Act of 1851 established Indian reservations in the territory that would become the states of Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Kansas. The US federal government envisioned the reservation system as a method of keeping Native American tribes off of the lands that white Americans wished to settle. Many tribes resisted the imposition of the reservation system, sparking a series of bloody battles that ultimately led to the forced relocation of most Native Americans onto the reservations." -- *Khan Academy*



Estimated Viewing: 12 Minutes
The 'Indian Problem'

Think like a Geographer!



"9.7 million people in the United States identified as American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN)—alone or in combination with another race—in the 2020 Census. While most Native Americans live in urban areas, they may represent a larger percentage of the population in some rural communities." -- 2020 *US Census*

Think about how human activities, landscapes, and other physical, biological, and cultural phenomena vary across space, and the factors that influence settlement patterns.

Additionally, tracing migration routes and learning why these movements took place will help follow the diffusion of people groups, ideas and technological artifacts, and judge their effects on the receiving areas.

What was the effect of Manifest Destiny on US-Indian relations?

"In the mid-nineteenth century, newspaper editor John O'Sullivan coined the term 'manifest destiny' to describe the belief that God intended for the United States to occupy North America from Atlantic to Pacific.

Though the term was new, the ideas underlying it were much older, dating back to the first colonial contact between Europeans and Native Americans. The ideology that became known as Manifest Destiny included a belief in the inherent superiority of white Americans, as well as the conviction that they were destined by God to conquer the territories of North America, from sea to shining sea. The ideology of Manifest Destiny justified extreme measures to clear the native population from the land, including forced removal and violent extermination. For proponents of Manifest Destiny, the American Indians were mere impediments to the forward march of racial and technological progress, and they advocated pursuing a policy of Indian Removal." -- *Khan Academy*



<https://2012english120.wordpress.com/2012/11/30/stabbing-westward-an-analysis-of-john-gasts-american-progress/> -John Gast

The Civilization Fund Act - 1819

"The Native American assimilation era first began in 1819, when the U.S. Congress passed The Civilization Fund Act. The act encouraged American education to be provided to Indigenous societies and therefore enforced the "civilization process".

The passing of this act eventually led to the creation of the federally funded Native American Boarding Schools and initiated the beginning of the Indian Boarding School era. The duration of this era ran from 1860 until 1978. Approximately 357 boarding schools operated across 30 states during this era both on and off reservations and housed over 60,000 native children. A third of these boarding schools were operated by Christian missionaries as well as members of the federal government. These boarding schools housed several thousand children." -- *The Indigenous Foundation*



The Indian Removal Act - 1830

"The Indian Removal Act was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson on May 28, 1830, authorizing the president to grant lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders. A few tribes went peacefully, but many resisted the relocation policy. During the fall and winter of 1838 and 1839, the Cherokees were forcibly moved west by the United States government. Approximately 4,000 Cherokees died on this forced march, which became known as the "Trail of Tears." -- *Library of Congress*

The Trail of Tears - 1838/39

"In 1838 and 1839, as part of Andrew Jackson's Indian removal policy, the Cherokee nation was forced to give up its lands east of the Mississippi River and to migrate to an area in present-day Oklahoma. The Cherokee people called this journey the "Trail of Tears," because of its devastating effects. The migrants faced hunger, disease, and exhaustion on the forced march. Over 4,000 out of 15,000 of the Cherokees died." -- *PBS*



The Indian Appropriations Act - 1851

"The U.S. Congress passes the Indian Appropriations Act, creating the reservation system. The government forces Native peoples to move to and live on reservations, where it can better subdue them. Native peoples find themselves severely restricted in their ability to hunt, fish, and gather their traditional foods. For some tribes, the U.S. institutes food rations, introducing wheat flour, grease, and sugar into American Indian diets."

Extermination of the buffalo - mid to late 1800's

"The history of the buffalo is entwined with the plight of the Native Americans in the American West. Indian tribes settled these same grasslands centuries later because of the plenteous bison. Native peoples came to rely on the bison for everything from food and clothing to shelter and religious worship. They used almost every part of the animal, including horns, meat and tail hairs."



By the 1800s, Native Americans learned to use horses to chase bison, dramatically expanding their hunting range. But then white trappers and traders introduced guns in the West, killing millions more buffalo for their hides. By the middle of the 19th century, even train passengers were shooting bison for sport. "Buffalo" Bill Cody, who was hired to kill bison, slaughtered more than 4,000 bison in two years. Bison were a centerpiece of his Wild West Show, which was very successful both in the United States and in Europe, distilling the excitement of the West to those who had little contact with it.

To make matters worse for wild buffalo, some U.S. government officials actively destroyed bison to defeat their Native American enemies who resisted the takeover of their lands by white settlers. American military commanders ordered troops to kill buffalo to deny Native Americans an important source of food." -- *PBS*

Buffalo skulls, photo from Library of Congress



Indian schools - 1860 - 1973

"In Indian civilization I am a Baptist, because I believe in immersing the Indian in our civilization and when we get them under, holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked." *Richard Henry Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867—1904, 1964*

"Indian boarding schools were founded to eliminate traditional American Indian ways of life and replace them with mainstream American culture. The first boarding schools were set up starting in the mid-nineteenth century either by the government or Christian missionaries. Initially, the government forced many Indian families to send their children to boarding schools. Later, Indian families chose to send their children to boarding schools because there were no other schools available.

At boarding schools, Indian children were separated from their families and cultural ways for long periods, sometimes four or more years. The children were forced to cut their hair and give up their traditional clothing. They had to give up their meaningful Native names and take English ones. They were not only taught to speak English but were punished for speaking their own languages. Their own traditional religious practices were forcibly replaced with Christianity. They were taught that their cultures were inferior. Some teachers ridiculed and made fun of the students' traditions. These lessons humiliated the students and taught them to be ashamed of being American Indian. The boarding schools had a bad effect on the self-esteem of Indian students and on the wellbeing of Native languages and cultures.



Photo from National Archives and Records Administration

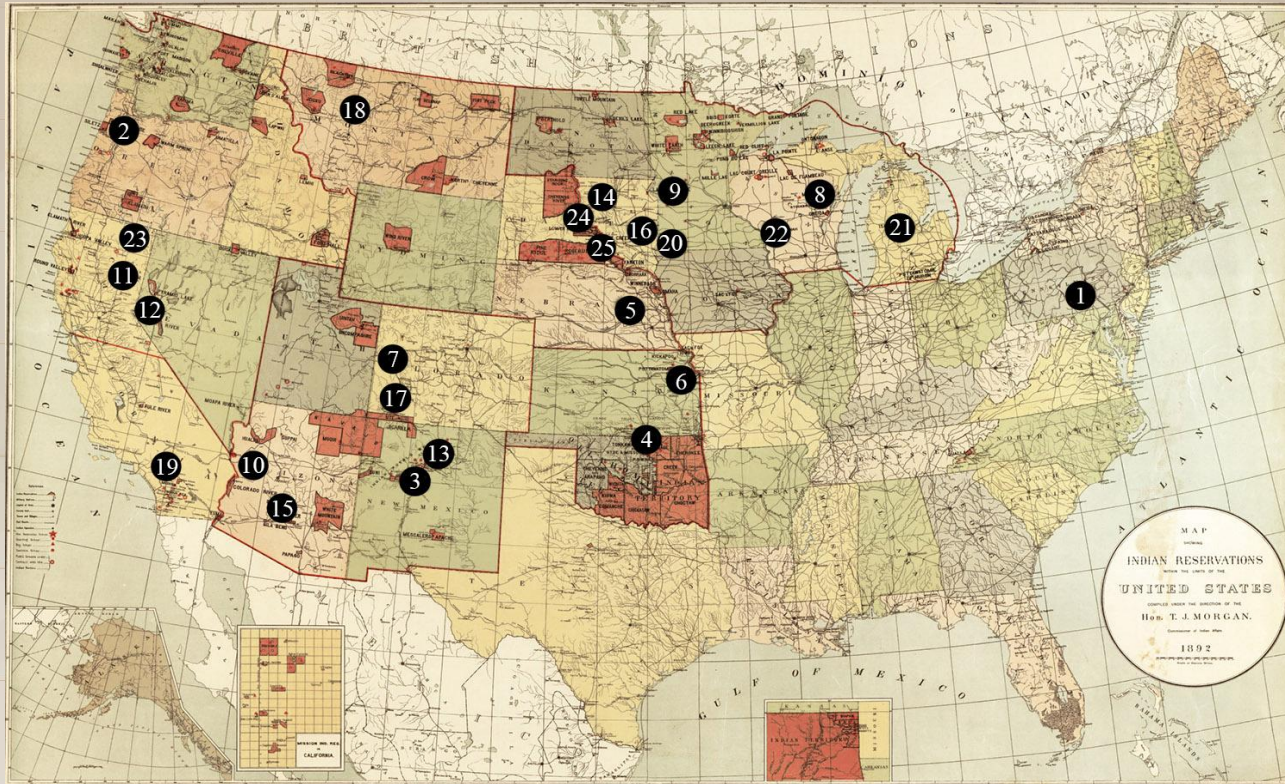
However, not all boarding school experiences were negative. Many of the Indian students had some good memories of their school days and made friends for life. They also acquired knowledge and learned useful skills that helped them later in life." -- *National Museum of the American Indian / Smithsonian*

NOTE: This video may be difficult to watch. It features first-hand accounts from students that attended a Native American boarding school.

Take a deeper look into life in a boarding school
Links to an external site.



Map with reservations and American Indian boarding schools marked - 1892



Map from Library of Congress, United States Office of Indian Affairs

The Dawes Act - 1887

"The Dawes Act of 1887 authorized the federal government to break up tribal lands by partitioning them into individual plots. Only those Native Americans who accepted the individual allotments were allowed to become US citizens. The objective of the Dawes Act was to assimilate Native Americans into mainstream US society by annihilating their cultural and social traditions. As a result of the Dawes Act, over ninety million acres of tribal land were stripped from Native Americans and sold to non-natives.

Initially, the Dawes Act did not apply to the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes" (Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole). They had already adopted many elements of American society and culture, which is why they were characterized as "civilized." Moreover, they were protected by treaties that had guaranteed that their tribal lands would remain free of white settlers. However, after they had proven unwilling to voluntarily accept individual allotments of land, the Curtis Act of 1898 amended the Dawes Act to apply to the Five Civilized Tribes as well. Their tribal governments were obliterated, their tribal courts were destroyed, and over ninety million acres of their tribal lands were sold off to white Americans.

During the Great Depression, the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt supported the US Indian Reorganization Act, which authorized a "New Deal" for Native American Indians, allowing them to organize and form their own tribal governments, and ending the land allotments created by Dawes Act. -- *Khan Academy*





How do current issues on native lands reflect the initial treatment of indigenous communities?

Land Dispossession

The consequences of land dispossession and forced migration continue to affect tribes today, says co-author Kyle Whyte, an environmental justice scholar at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. The data set shows present-day tribal lands are more at risk from climate change than tribes' historical areas, as they experience more extreme heat and less precipitation. "It's not just that Indigenous people happen to live in areas that are disproportionately impacted in negative ways by climate change," Whyte says. They were often forcibly relocated to land that settlers considered less valuable, and those lands are more at risk from climate change hazards today. -- *Science*

Land Dispossession



Keystone XL Pipeline

How a single pipeline project became the epicenter of an enormous environmental, public health, and civil rights battle. The takedown of the notorious Keystone XL (KXL) tar sands pipeline will go down as one of this generation's most monumental environmental victories. After more than 10 years of tenacious protests, drawn-out legal battles, and flip-flopping executive orders spanning three presidential administrations, the Keystone XL pipeline is now gone for good. National Resource Defense Council (NRDC)

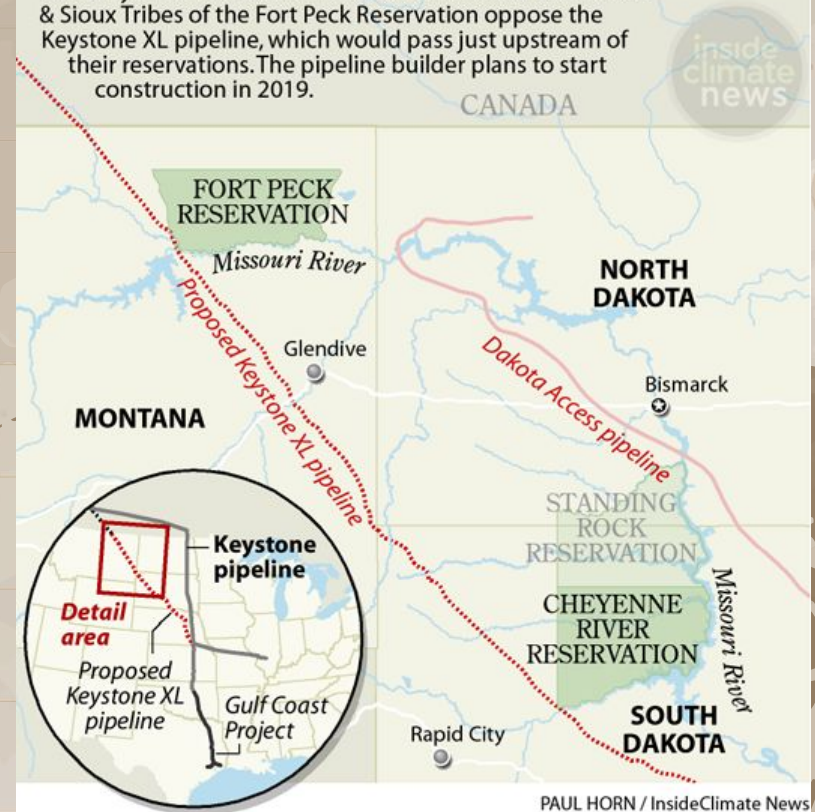
Keystone XL Pipeline

Uranium Mining on the Navajo Nation

Mining companies blasted 4 million tons of uranium out of Navajo land between 1944 and 1986. The federal government purchased the ore to make atomic weapons. As the Cold War threat petered out the companies left, abandoning more than 500 mines.

Keystone XL Meets Resistance

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Reservation oppose the Keystone XL pipeline, which would pass just upstream of their reservations. The pipeline builder plans to start construction in 2019.

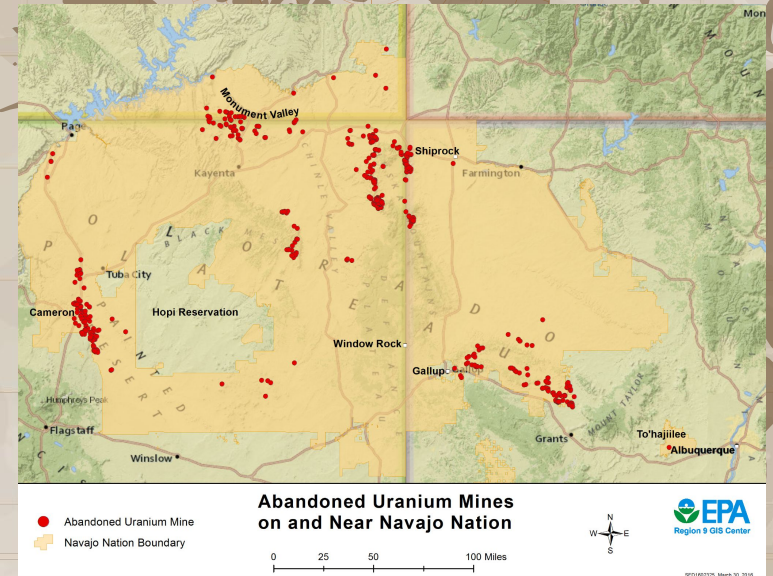


[Uranium Mining on the Navajo Nation](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)

- [Links to an external site.](#)
- [Health impacts from uranium mines](#)
- [The Toxic Legacy of Uranium Mining on Navajo Land: The Disproportionate Struggle of Indigenous Peoples and Water](#)
- [Links to an external site.](#)

Video about the Mexican Hat Uranium Disposal site & a map of abandoned mines on/near Navajo Nation (below)





[Bureau of Indian Affairs Links to an external site.](#) An interactive map that displays the land areas of Federally-Recognized Tribes.

[How to Address Native American Issues as a Non-Native: A Resource for Allies Links to an external site.](#)



Land Acknowledgement

"Land acknowledgment is a traditional custom that dates back centuries in many Native nations and communities. Today, land acknowledgments are used by Native Peoples and non-Natives to recognize Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live. Before public events and other important gatherings hosted by the National Museum of the American Indian, a speaker offers this acknowledgment displayed in the quote container on behalf of everyone present.

After millennia of Native history, and centuries of displacement and dispossession, acknowledging original Indigenous inhabitants is complex. Many places in the Americas have been home to different Native Nations over time, and many Indigenous people no longer live on lands to which they have ancestral ties. Even so, Native Nations, communities, families, and individuals today sustain their sense of belonging to ancestral homelands and protect these connections through Indigenous languages, oral traditions, ceremonies, and other forms of cultural expression. The museum's acknowledgment is intended to recognize the Indigenous peoples who have lived where we now work over the long span of human history and the large contemporary Native population that lives in the Washington area and New York City today.



When people ask for guidance in making land acknowledgments, we suggest reaching out directly to local Indigenous communities and to Native Nations forcibly removed from the area in the past to ask how they want to be recognized. Land acknowledgments can be spoken at the beginning of public and private gatherings, from school programs and sporting events to town halls.

Making a land acknowledgment should be motivated by genuine respect and support for Native Peoples. Speaking and hearing words of recognition is an important step in creating collaborative, accountable, continuous, and respectful relationships with Indigenous nations and communities." -- *Native Knowledge*

When writing a land acknowledgement, be sure to include the following - thank you, Melissa Mercado!

- The tribal people who were indigenous to the area (and history/background)
- What are they are doing, stand for, and/or accomplishing
- Decide how you can commit to supporting these tribes

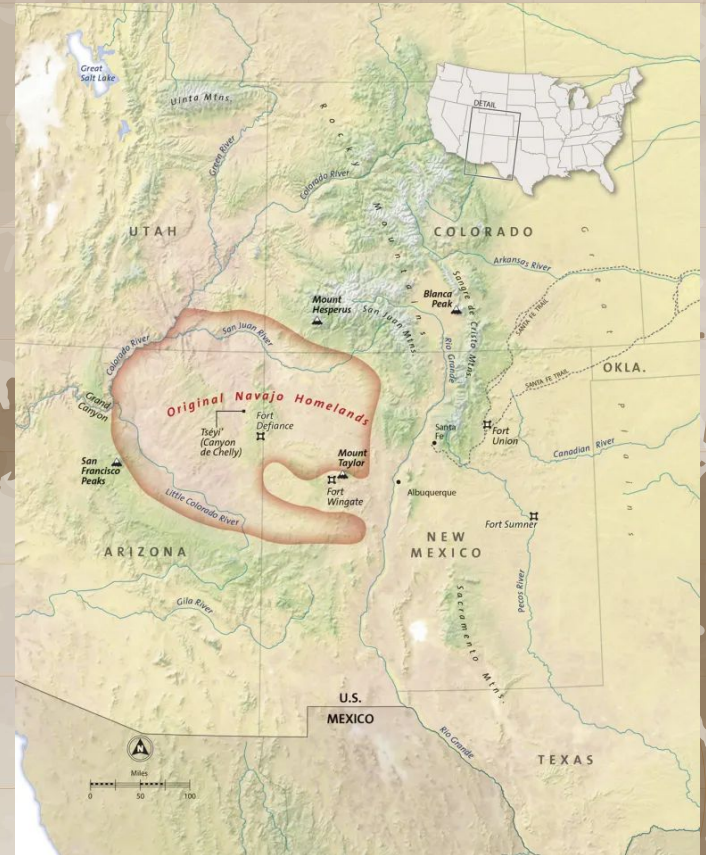


Navajo / Diné Land Ownership

Land Reform in the Navajo Nation | Diné College

Links to an external site.

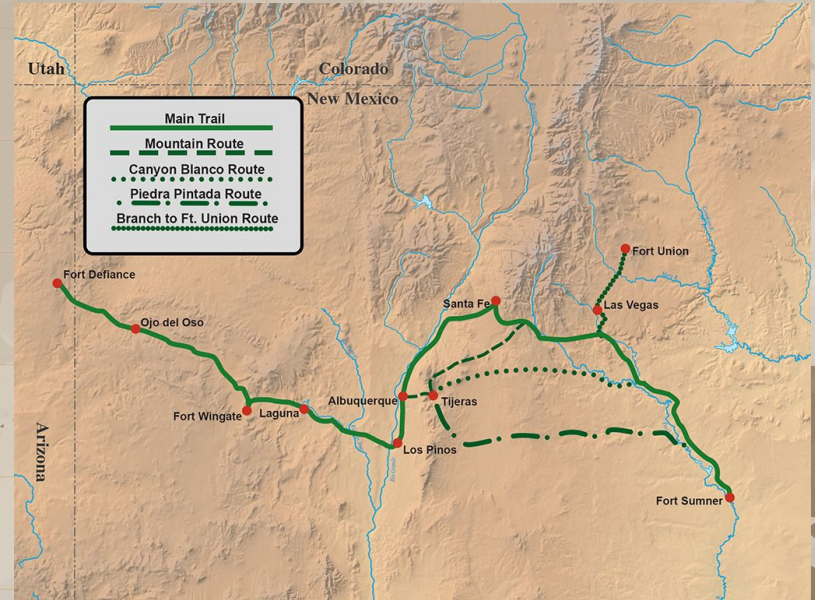
"Historically, land in Diné Bideyah was not held, but stewarded in clans led by a matriarch who was chosen unanimously. Acting as a land and clan manager, the matriarch was central to the smooth running of beneficial relationships with the land and among members of the clan. Settlements did not descend but were stewarded intact in the name of the clan (not unlike perpetual corporations).



Dine Bideyah

<https://native-land.ca/maps/territories/navajo/>

The historical Diné method of land management was at its most evolved just prior to Hwéeldi, the Long Walk, during which Diné cultivated lands were destroyed and Diné people rounded up and marched hundreds of miles into unsheltered, oppressive, and demeaning captivity at Fort Sumner over the course of 5 years. While in captivity, the people were organized into camps without regard to families and clans, intermingled with other captive tribes. There were many losses of life. The captives were allowed to return to a much diminished Diné Bikeyah, now called a reservation. While some families were able to resume cultivation in the old ways, many families had lost their matriarchs. Land once cultivated remained vacant season after season. To this day, vacant land on the Navajo Nation is considered as the customary land of a clan that will return." -- *Navajofamilies.org*



<https://mytext.cnm.edu/lesson/the-navajo-long-walk/>

Additional Content

The Long Walk & Bosque Redondo
Bosque Redondo Teacher Resources
Links to an external site.

Navajo Indian captives under guard, Fort Sumner, New Mexico, ca. 1864–1868.
Photograph by the United States Army Signal Corps, courtesy of Palace of the Governors
Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), 028534
<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/navajo/bosque-redondo/bosque-redondo.cshtml>



"The center of a million-acre reservation known as the Bosque Redondo, this site represents one of the most tragic periods in American history.

As Spaniards, Mexicans and Americans settled in the territory of New Mexico, they were subject to raids from the Navajo and Mescalero Apache people who fought to maintain their traditional homelands and to obtain valuable resources from the settlers. In efforts to control the raiding the Spanish, the Mexicans and then the Americans, fought the Indians. Treaties were written and broken, nothing much changed. Raiding continued until the early 1860s when a significant military force became available.

In 1863, when the US Army had defeated the invading Confederates in New Mexico, there was a large enough military force available to deal with the "Indian problem". It was decided that these problematic Indians would be brought to a spot far away from the populated areas of the Territory. There they could be taught to farm and learn the ways of the white man so they would stop their raiding and settle down.



The Mescalero were the first to be subdued and brought to Bosque Redondo early in 1863. They had been promised that if they moved to Bosque Redondo and behaved, they would soon be allowed to go home.

Known by the Navajos as the "Long Walk," over 50 different groups were forced to walk a distance of more than 350 miles to the reservation in east central New Mexico. It was an arduous journey that saw them travel 12-15 miles a day, often in chilling cold or stifling heat. The Navajo continued to arrive at Bosque Redondo for a period of over two years.

At its peak in the winter of 1864, more than 8,500 Navajo and nearly 500 Mescalero Apache people were held at the Bosque Redondo Indian Reservation.

Most of the Mescalero Apache became so disenchanted with life as farmers and the meager rations that they left in the night during November of 1865 to go home. A small group who could not keep pace with the hasty departure, stayed behind to keep the campfires going so the army would not realize that the tribe had left.



For the Navajo, another three years of crop failures, suffering and death preceded the arrival of General Sherman and his Peace Commission to investigate reports of government waste and mistreatment of the Navajo. He found the reports to be true and began to affect solutions; he first offered the Navajo leaders an expense paid trip to Oklahoma. They turned him down and instead asked to go home. Talks began between the Navajo headmen and the Peace Commission.

Negotiations with the Indians resulted in the Treaty of 1868 signed on June 1st, 1868. The Navajos were allowed to return to their traditional homelands in the four corners region of the southwest." -- *Bosque Redondo Memorial at Fort Sumner Historic Site*



Why tell a story in History?

"When I was in elementary and secondary school, I studied history or, rather, I studied about history. I memorized names, dates, events—1492, 1776, 1865, 1945, Allies, Roosevelt, Lincoln, Magellan... History was a timeline of people and events. But I didn't get a sense of how people were affected by events, that issues had sides and circumstances, what the long range effect of war could be, or how events became part of history because of their meaning. There were no stories, just facts. And, of course, those facts came from our textbooks. Besides bias, lack of currency, singular perspective, and the myriad of other problems with textbooks, textbooks determine what students learn; they appear to be objective while deciding what is important, why, and to whom; and textbooks do not provoke critical thinking about issues."

-- *Lesley Roessing, secondary teacher*

Photo from UT Austin

<https://www.lib.utexas.edu/exhibits/portraits/index.php?img=216>

