



The WILD WEST

People and Events That Shaped the American West

Manifest Destiny

Manifest Destiny was the 19th Century belief that the United States was destined, or meant, to occupy all land from the Atlantic Ocean to the coast of the Pacific. For the settlers, American expansion meant new land to farm, places to mine for metals and minerals, and natural resources.

For the Native Americans, however, the expansion meant the loss of their land, and sometimes even their lives. For this reason, American troops and Native American tribes sometimes engaged in battle. The United States government forced some Native Americans from their homelands and relocated them to far away places. Many lost their lives on the journey to these new places.

The idea of Manifest Destiny was used as a reason to annex the Republic of Texas in 1845, Oregon in 1846, and the Mexican Cession in 1848. The Mexican Cession consisted of what is now California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Later on, it was used to justify U.S. involvement in Alaska, Hawaii, and the Philippines.

Fun Fact:

The term "Manifest Destiny" was first used by writer and journalist John O'Sullivan in an 1845 magazine article.

If you were a settler in the American West, would you believe in Manifest Destiny? Why or why not?
