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Ministere de l'enseignement superieur et de  
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# Lecture 7: Westward Expansion

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March, 2026

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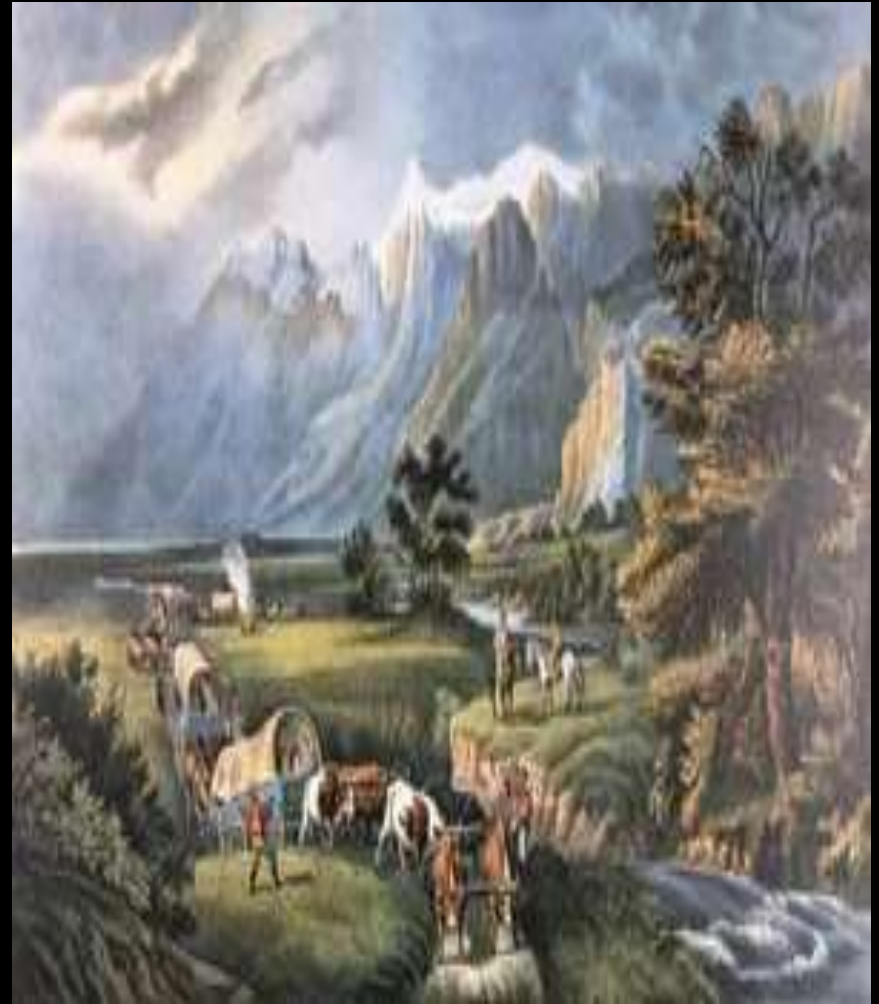
- **Forced Removal Act**
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# Introduction

In the 1800s, the 13 original U.S. states expanded west, growing from a thin coastal strip into a huge nation. Pioneers crossed rivers and plains in wagons, drawn by cheap land and gold, guided by Manifest Destiny—the belief it was America's fate to spread coast to coast. This built new states and railroads but displaced Native Americans and fueled fights over slavery. By 1900, America reached the Pacific.



# U.S. EXPANSION IN NORTH AMERICA



**What is “Manifest Destiny”  
and what is its role in the  
westward expansion?**

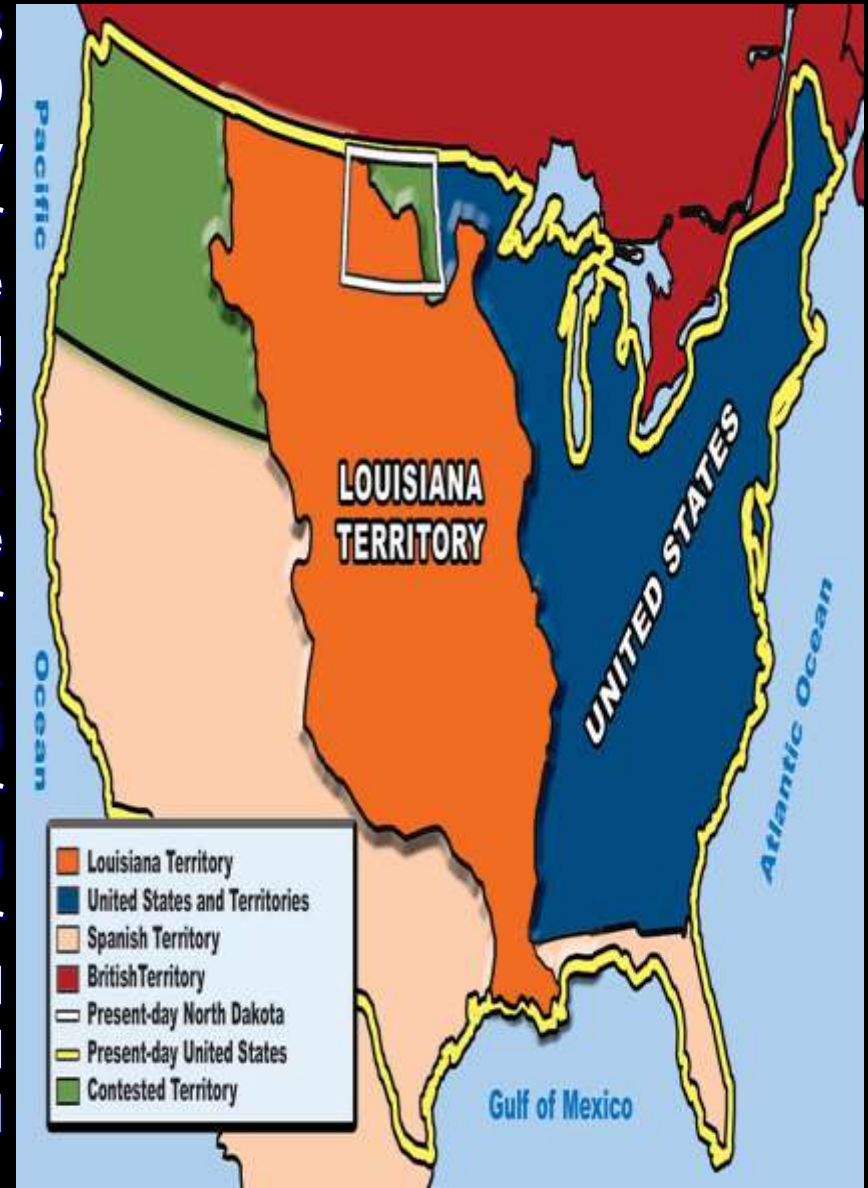
# Manifest Destiny

Manifest Destiny was a 19th-century U.S. belief that Americans were divinely destined to expand across North America. Americans believed in it due to notions of racial superiority, American exceptionalism, and a God-given mission to spread democracy and civilization, often viewing Native Americans and Mexicans as obstacles. It justified westward expansion through settlement, the Mexican-American War, and Native American displacement, shaping the continental U.S.

## Major Annexations: Louisiana Purchase (1803)

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 involved the U.S. acquiring 828,000 square miles of French territory west of the Mississippi River for \$15 million, instantly doubling the nation's size and incorporating lands for future states like Louisiana, Missouri, and Iowa. France sold it mainly to finance Napoleon's wars in Europe after losing Haiti to rebellion.

**Economically**, it secured Mississippi River and New Orleans control for farmers' trade and agricultural exports, opening fertile plains for settlement. **Politically**, it eliminated a continental rival, ignited expansionist ambitions, and paved the way for Manifest Destiny.





The course and watershed of the **Mississippi River**

*The Father of Waters*

200 Miles

400 Km

# Major Acquisitions: Alaska Purchase (1867)

- Russia had offered to sell its North American territory, Alaska to the United States on several occasions, but the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 led to the postponement of discussions. The United States agreed to a proposal to purchase Alaska (1,518,800 square km) for 7.2 million Dollars, after Russia suffered heavy losses during the Crimean War (1853-1856).
- The Alaska Purchase of 1867 economically unlocked vast resources like furs, gold (Klondike Rush 1896), oil (Prudhoe Bay), fisheries, and timber, plus Pacific trade routes that generated billions in long-term revenue far exceeding the \$7.2 million price, despite early infrastructure costs. Politically, it extended Manifest Destiny to North America's edge, countered British/Canadian expansion, secured strategic military bases for Asia-Pacific influence amid imperial rivalries, and showcased U.S. diplomatic boldness.

## Major Acquisitions: Alaska Purchase (1867)



# Major Annexations: Texas Annexation (1845)

Texas declared independence from Mexico in 1836 and sought U.S. annexation that year, but faced rejection due to slavery balance concerns (13 slave vs. 13 free states), Northern-South tensions, and war risks with Mexico. The annexation was opposed by both political parties.

By 1844, U.S. fears of Texas' ties to Britain and France, plus its booming slave-based cotton economy from immigration and investment, made annexation a presidential election issue, leading to ratification on December 29, 1845. This economically elevated Texas as a cotton/cattle powerhouse (later oil), but politically sparked the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) and deepened sectional divides.



# Major Acquisitions: Mexican Cession (1848)

It is the region in the modern-day southwestern United States that Mexico ceded to the U.S. in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 after the Mexican–American War. Mexico ceded California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, most of Arizona and Colorado, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming to the United States.

Economically, it unlocked California's Gold Rush, Pacific ports for Asian trade, minerals, and farmland; politically, it realized Manifest Destiny's continental vision but ignited slavery expansion debates.



# U.S. TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS



# Major Acquisitions: Spanish Cession (1819)

- The Spanish Cession, via the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty, transferred Florida from Spain to the U.S. and fixed a western border to the Pacific for \$5 million in claims. Economically, it provided Florida's ports and timber for trade plus western fur/settlement access; politically, it promoted early Manifest Destiny, settled disputes peacefully, and reduced European threats.



**What were U.S. Governmental  
Policies to Encourage  
Westward Expansion ?**

# U.S. Governmental Policies

- U.S. policies actively promoted westward expansion under Manifest Destiny by distributing land, building infrastructure, and displacing Native populations.
- **Homestead Act (1862)**: Offered 160 acres of public land to settlers for a small fee after five years of farming, spurring mass migration west.
- **Indian Removal Act (1830)**: Authorized forced relocation of Native tribes (e.g., Trail of Tears), clearing eastern lands for white farmers and expansion.
- **The Dawes Act (1887)**, also called the General Allotment Act, broke up Native American tribal reservations into individual family plots to assimilate Natives into farming and U.S. society while granting citizenship to participants. It aimed to assimilate natives, while opening "surplus" reservation lands to white settlers and railroads for sale, boosting national agriculture and development.
- **The Transcontinental Railroad**, finished in 1869, sped up westward expansion by cutting travel time across the U.S. from months to days. It helped settlers move west fast, created big markets for farming and mining goods, grew towns near tracks, and let the army control Native lands—though it hurt tribes by killing off buffalo herds.

# Transcontinental Railroads



# Buffalo



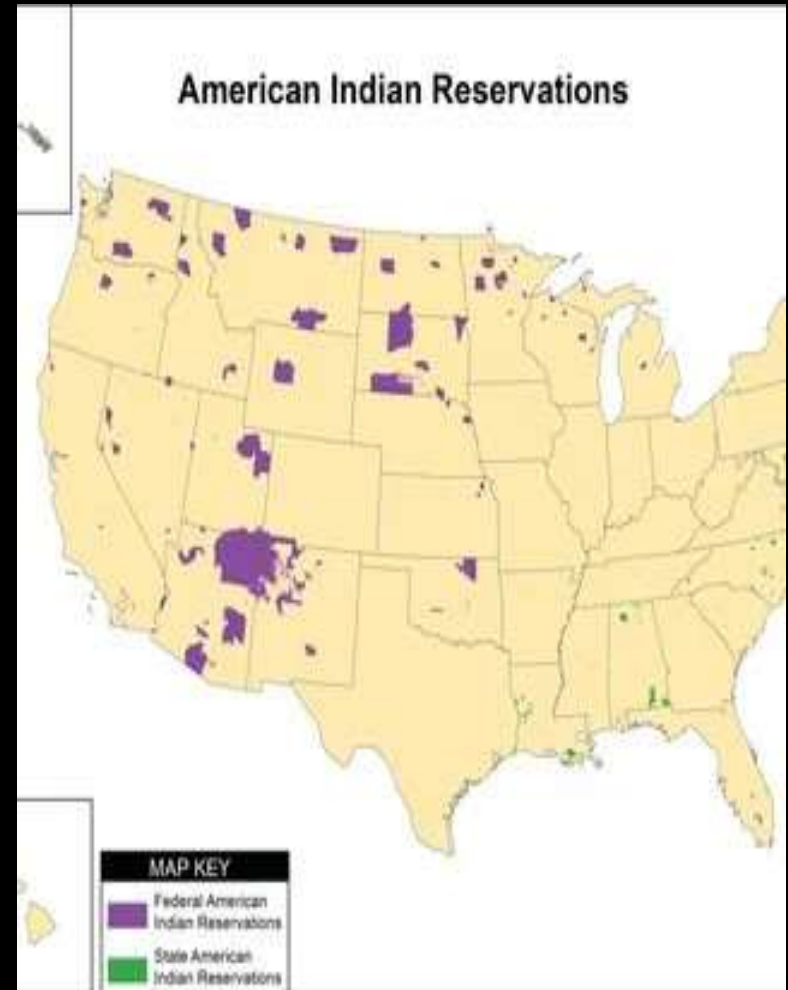
**What was the Impact of  
Westward Expansion on  
Native Americans ?**

# Native Americans

U.S. government policies and westward expansion inflicted catastrophic losses on Native Americans, exemplified by the **Trail of Tears**—where the Indian Removal Act (1830) forcibly marched 60,000 from the Five Civilized Tribes (Cherokee, Choctaw, etc.) to Oklahoma reservations, killing about 15,000 from disease, starvation, and exposure—and later reservation confinements that shrank tribal lands from 138 million to 48 million acres via acts like Dawes (1887). These measures, alongside railroads and military campaigns, enabled white settlement but triggered violence, buffalo extermination, cultural erasure, and economic collapse for Indigenous nations



# Native Americans' Reservations

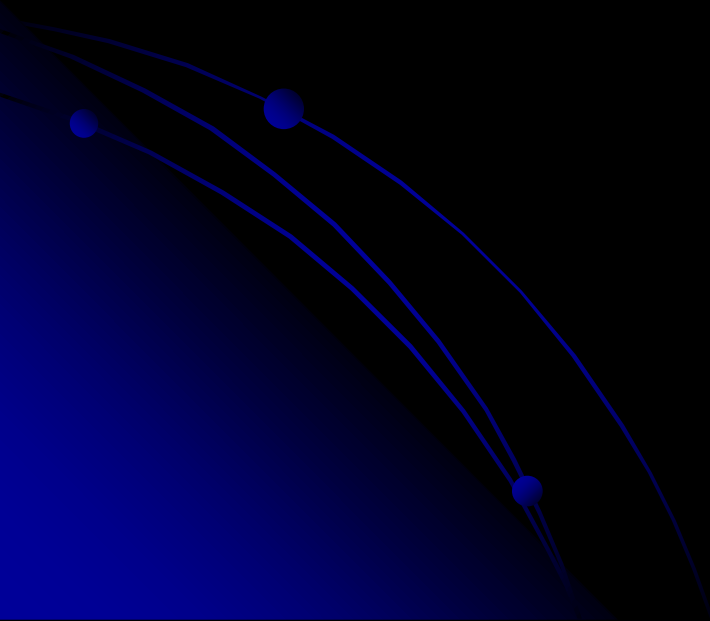


# Exercise 1

- Make a presentation about:

1. The Impact of U.S. westward expansion and governmental policies on Native Americans.

2. American-Mexican War, its causes and impacts.



# Exercise 2

- Listen to the following teaching video and answer the following questions (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhdE1QXylxc>).
- 1. What is “Manifest Destiny”, according to the video?
- 2. When was the term first used and by whom?
- 3. Was the idea of “Manifest Destiny” new?
- 4. When did the notion become popular?
- 5. What were the political motivations of “Manifest Destiny”?
- 6. What were the economic motivations?
- 7. Which technological advances encouraged westward expansion?
- 8. What are the four (4) impacts mentioned in the video ?

*Thank You*

