

Westward Expansion

Primary Source

Manifest Destiny

Newspaper editor John L. O’Sullivan wrote powerfully in favor of Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny was an idea that caught on and was supported by many Americans. But one of the advantages of a democracy is that people who disagree with popular ideas can also express their views. In 1837, William Ellery Channing, a famous and respected minister, wrote a letter to Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky. In his letter, Channing disagreed with the idea of Manifest Destiny.

Directions: Read the excerpt from Channing’s letter below, and reread the quote from O’Sullivan on page 447 in your yearbook. Then answer the questions below.

We are a restless people . . . impatient of the ordinary laws of progress. . . . We boast of our rapid growth, forgetting that, throughout nature, noble [remarkable] growths are slow. . . . It is full time that we should lay on ourselves serious, resolute [steady] restraint. Possessed of a domain [land], vast enough for the growth of ages, it is time for us to stop in the career of acquisition and conquest. Already endangered by our greatness, we cannot advance without imminent peril [immediate danger] to our institutions, union, prosperity, virtue, and peace. . . .
 —William Ellery Channing, 1837

1. What does Channing say that Americans boast about?

2. Why does Channing think that Americans are wrong to boast about this?

3. Why does Channing oppose Manifest Destiny?

4. Evaluate Information Do you agree with Channing? Why or why not?

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Primary Source

Narcissa Whitman's Letter to Her Sister

The following is from a letter Narcissa Whitman wrote to her sister while she was traveling on the Oregon Trail in June 1836.

Directions: *Read the letter. Then answer the questions below.*

Since we came up with the camp, I rode in the wagons most of the way to the Black Hills. It is astonishing how well we get along with our wagons where there are no roads. I think I may say it is easier traveling here than on any turnpike in the States.

On the way to the buffalo country we had to bake bread for ten persons. It was difficult at first, as we did not understand working out-doors; but we became accustomed to it, so that it became quite easy. June found us ready to receive our first taste of buffalo. Since that time I have had but little to do with cooking. Not one in our number relishes [enjoys] buffalo meat as well as my husband and I. He has a different way for cooking every piece of meat. . . . We have had no bread since. We have meat and tea in the morn, and tea and meat at noon. All our variety consists of the different ways of cooking. I relish it well and it agrees with me. My health is excellent. So long as I have buffalo meat I do not wish anything else.

—Narcissa Whitman,
Platte River, South Side, six days above the Fort Laramie Fork,
near the foot of the Rocky Mountains, June 27, 1836

1. Where was Whitman when she wrote the letter?

2. What does Whitman think of buffalo meat?

3. What does Whitman's comment about wagon travel say about the roads in the United States at the time she is writing?

4. **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think the Whitmans stopped baking bread when they reached buffalo country?

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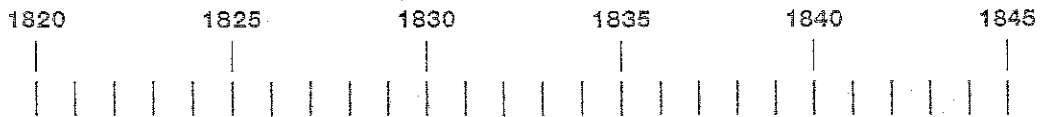
Timeline

Texas War for Independence

Making a timeline can help organize events in the order that they happened. Use this timeline to clarify the causes and effects of the Texas War for Independence.

Directions: *The following list identifies seven events related to the Texas War for Independence. On the timeline below, indicate when each event took place. You can use your book to help you. Write the letter of the event at the correct point on the timeline. Then answer the questions below.*

- A. The United States annexes Texas.
- B. Texans declare independence from Mexico.
- C. Mexico becomes independent from Spain.
- D. Texas becomes independent from Mexico.
- E. Mexico bans further American settlement.
- F. Santa Anna becomes president of Mexico.
- G. Moses Austin gets permission to establish an American colony in Texas.



1. When did Texans declare independence?

2. How many years after Texas became independent did the United States annex Texas?

3. **Analyze Cause and Effect** Explain how one event on the timeline caused a later event on the timeline.

Chapter and Section Support