Name:_____ Date: _____

Westward Expansion

The Louisiana Purchase

The United States wanted to expand to the west in the 1800s. President Thomas Jefferson believed that land was a critical part of the new nation. He believed that more land would help the country grow. He wanted citizens to be able to own land cheaply, if they desired. To do this, he would have to expand the country. Manifest destiny was the idea that Americans were destined to settle in new parts of North America.



The Louisiana Purchase

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In 1803, Jefferson bought land that was controlled by the French government. This was called the Louisiana Purchase. The amount of land in the purchase was quite large. At that time, Louisiana was much larger than today's state of Louisiana. The acquisition, or takeover, of this land doubled the size of the United States. The area stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition



Lewis, Clark, and Sacagawea

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President Jefferson wanted to explore the new land. While the French controlled the land, it had been largely unexplored and unmapped. He sent two explorers and a group of soldiers to explore and map the new land in 1804. The explorers were Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. This became known as The Lewis and Clark expedition.

Their expedition was a journey with a purpose. The group traveled up the Missouri River, to the Rocky Mountains, then to the Pacific Ocean. President Jefferson wanted to find a water route to the pacific for trade. He also wanted to learn about the people and animals currently living there. Lewis and Clark had the help of an American Indian woman named Sacagawea to help them interpret the languages of the people currently living there.

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