

# American expansion in the 1940s



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American westward expansion started in the 1820s and peaked by 1845. After the defeat of Napoleon's armies on American and European lands, the minds of many Americans got concentrated on exploring own continent. This notion of expansion was greatly supported by the government and American presidents James Monroe and Andrew Jackson. Therefore, a number of new states were admitted to the country within those decades. Another reason encouraging American people to go west was the land boom which started after Louisiana Purchase.

After acquisition of huge territories, farmers received an opportunity to settle down along the Mississippi River and start their new businesses there. Together with the rise of the country's banking system, this expansion substantially contributed to the development of economy and commerce in those times. In addition, in the 1830s President Jackson initiated a campaign directed on driving out American Indian tribes (including Cherokee Native Americans) living in Ohio Valley and on the territories around modern Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama to less fertile and attractive lands to the West of the Mississippi.

As a result of this governmental operation thousands of the Natives died in resistance fights or from hunger and diseases at their new place of settlement. This historical action is known as the Trail of Tears. Therefore, the above mentioned factors formed the background for continuing the expansion in the 1840s which was mainly about exploring the territories along the Pacific coast and far west. First of all, in 1845 Texas was annexed to the Union as a result of so called Texas Rebellion.

This was one more successful operation directed on gaining independence of Texas territories from Mexican domination followed by admission of Texas as a part of American Union. The reaction of Mexican government on these territorial pretensions of America was furious and in 1846 the Mexican War was initiated. The battles raged throughout New Mexico, California and Texas, but Mexican armies proved to be considerably weaker than American powers were, that's why in 1848 President James K.

Polk celebrated his easy but glorious victory of new lands, including the parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona, as well as Utah, Nevada, California and New Mexico. Furthermore, in 1846 the Union gained the territories of modern Oregon as a result of successful negotiations with the Great Britain which had those lands under control. This way the United States could dominate throughout the continent from the Atlantic seashore to the Pacific Coast. Therefore, within the period of 5 years the territories of the Union were increased almost by a third.

In order to justify and legalize its territorial acquisitions, American government issued a doctrine called Manifest Destiny. It stated that American nation was destined to expand and explore the lands to the west. Manifest Destiny was supposed to proclaim the main ideology of those times which was supporting and promoting the idea of expansion. Finally, in the beginning of 1948 gold was discovered in California. This discovery caused famous Gold Rush, during which thousands of gold hunters and "forty-niners" stampeded to newly discovered gold fields in far west looking for big money and a new wealthy life.

Historical period between 1835 and 1850 can be called the epoch of exploration and settlement. This huge territorial enlargement of the Union deepened the conflict and differences between South and North of the country, as well as it brought up the fateful question about allowing slavery in the western regions. Bibliography: • Noble, Matt. Westward Expansion (1807-1912). SparkNote. 18 Nov. 2007 .