

Western expansion dbq essay



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The expansion of slavery was a mere consequence of the otherwise successful Manifest Destiny. Money runs the world. There is no doubt that acquiring resources and expanding a nation is necessary for the existence of a country. Americans realized this and was in dire need of expanding.

Expanding lands offer many more resources and more room for the population. With more resources comes more wealth, which is what the expansion offered. " Across the Plains in a Prairie Schooner" by Catherine Haun (Document G) describes the " gold fever" which took over the nation.

The US was in a " period of national hard times" and many moved towards California in hopes of finding gold. This supports the fact that expansion was for gaining wealth and not for spreading the institution of slavery.

Immigrants came to discover new lands for many reasons including freedoms, expanding wealth, and starting new lives. When the United States was established as a country, it started to expand. This prominent new land offered many immigrants a fresh start in life. Soon problems arose and the isolated area was in brink of overpopulation. This is when the US started to expand.

Life is about survival of the fittest and America is a perfect example of this. Americans saw the opportunity to expand and took it. The Natives were believed to not use the land for its full potential, which is another reason to take and use the land. The " promised land" was a beautiful land as described by the song " To the West". (Document D) The song states lines such as " to the land of the free" and shows no signs of wanting to spread slavery. Manifest Destiny to those whom sang this song as about acquiring the beautiful " promised land" and strengthening the nation.

Slavery was the unfortunate institution that followed the expansion of the US. The expansion west was inevitable and was believed it should be taken by Americans. In the " Inaugural Address of James Knox Polk" (Document I), Polk supports that Americans should expand westward and the land was rightfully theirs. Polk believed the " title to the country of the Oregon is ' clear and unquestionable,' and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children. The land was believed that it belonged to Americans and that is the reason for expanding, not for expanding slavery.

All the acquired land during Manifest Destiny (Louisiana Purchase, Mexican War, etc) was originally free land. In Wilmot agrees that slavery follows in the footsteps of expansion like a plague. Wilmot had a hatred for slavery and slavery expanding to free land angered him. Slavery was in fact only used for sectional purposes and if slavery was planted in a state, it stripped the north from benefitting. Slavery was not originally wanted to spread, but xpanding territory was wanted by Manifest Destiny.

The painting " Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way' by Emanuel Leutze (Document A) shows the strong desire for Americans to expand to westward. Americans have always had this desire to expand, shown in the Lewis and Clark expeditions in the acquired land of the Louisiana Purchase. The " United States Magazine and Democratic Review' of John L. O'Sullivan wants to expand by allowing Texas into the Union and eventually expand to California. O'Sullivan believes we need to expand to better the nation for free development.

This creates nationalism in readers and encourages the readers to support expansion. He says “ marking its trail with schools and colleges, courts and representative halls, mills and meetinghouses. A population will soon be in actual occupation of California, over which it will be idle for Mexico to dream of dominion. ” O’Sullivan wants the population to imagine this expansion and all the possible benefits it will have to the nation, not on expanding slavery. Polk’s War Message to Congress (May 11, 1846) (Document B) shows that expansion was inevitable and also promotes nationalism.

The war was started by Mexico invading American territory and shedding blood on American soil. This led to the conclusion that the war was officially started by Mexico and America was merely defending itself. The war was inevitable and expansion was forced to happen. The Ostend Manifesto of October 18, 1854 (Document J) was considering purchasing Cuba from Spain. This purchase was promoting nationalism by expanding to even more land and gaining it from Spain. The second meaning in this is how they do not want to implement slavery in Cuba.

The document states should we permit Cuba to be Africanized and become a second St. Domingo. St. Domingo was a place of slave rebellion that had strong impacts. After the purchase (which doesn’t occur), the document is suggesting not implementing slavery for the possible dangers that it could bring. Although many believed Manifest Destiny’s main purpose was to spread the institution of slavery, this was incorrect. The “ Report on the War with Mexico,” (April, 1847) (Document F) by Charles Sumner shows that slavery is indeed spreading.

But as shown through the Historical Congressional Apportionment (Document H), over the years of Manifest Destiny, the slave states and free states both increased, but the free states increased more than the slave states. This shows that Manifest Destiny had the ultimate conclusion of not having slavery as a main purpose. The main purpose for Manifest Destiny was not spreading slavery, but was to expand wealth, expand territories, and mostly to promote and for nationalism. The statement, " The main purpose of Manifest Destiny was to expand the institution of slavery. " is NOT valid.