

## FACTS FILE 7

### Westward Expansion

- The US purchased Louisiana from the French in 1803 for 15 million dollars. This amounted to the purchase of 828,000 square miles of land, or about 500 million acres, for less than three cents an acre.
- The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States and gave the US control of the Mississippi River and New Orleans, a major port.
- In 1804 President Thomas Jefferson commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to lead an expedition west across the continent. Their mission was to map a route to the Pacific Ocean, record scientific data about the flora and fauna they encountered, and encourage peaceful relationships with Native Americans in hope of establishing trade.
- In the early 19th century many Americans moved west to the land between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River.
- Among the many routes settlers took west were the Great Wagon Road across Pennsylvania and the Wilderness Road through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. Settlers also traveled on flatboats down the Ohio River into Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois.
- The Lancaster Turnpike was built in 1790 by a private company. A pike or pole was turned to allow travelers to pass after paying a toll. This road was built on a bed of gravel, allowing water to drain.
- By 1820 there were 4,000 miles of turnpike roads in the eastern portion of the United States, making it possible for farmers to travel to markets 50 or 60 miles away.
- Roads built of logs in rows like corduroy cloth provided a bumpy ride but kept wagon wheels from getting stuck in the mud.
- In 1807 Robert Fulton launched his steamboat, the Clermont, on the Hudson river. It travelled 300 miles in just 62 hours, a record speed.
- In 1825 the Erie Canal opened. This manmade waterway extended from the Hudson River in New York to Lake Erie, opening up the entire Great Lakes region to New York merchants and shippers. New York City boomed and soon surpassed Philadelphia as the nation's biggest city.
- The movement west had dire consequences for Native Americans. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced Native Americans to move west of the Mississippi.
- Cherokees, as well as members of other southeastern tribes, marched west over hundreds of miles. Without proper food and shelter, many died along the way. This journey is known as the Trail of Tears.
- Sparked by stories of giant turnips and a land of plenty, pioneers headed west along the Oregon Trail.
- Beginning in 1843, wagon trains headed out of Independence, Missouri, each spring for the arduous, six-month journey. The route west was dangerous. Pioneers who survived crossing rain-swollen rivers in the spring or snow-covered mountains in early fall, were just as likely to die of disease.
- The 1890 census reported that the US no longer had a frontier. The West was settled.

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