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**The Manifest Destiny and Westward Movement: Ideological and
Historical Perspectives**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to our parents for their never-ending motivation and for teaching us that even the most difficult task can be finished if approached one step at a time.

To our loved ones who have supported us throughout this journey.

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It is impossible to begin a study without the assistance of others. While writing our master's dissertation, we received a tremendous amount of assistance and guidance. First and foremost, we want to express gratitude to Dr. DJERIBIAI Adel, our dissertation supervisor, whose broad experience was invaluable in developing the research objectives and methodologies. We would not have been able to take our work to a higher level if it were not for his preparation and evaluation.

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Finally, we must express our gratitude to our personal circle of relatives and friends especially our generous parents, for their unwavering support throughout this challenging academic year.

Abstract

The ideology of "Manifest Destiny" played a major role in the 19th-century westward expansion of the United States, based on the belief that Americans had a divine mission to spread their values across the continent. This research explores whether the United States of America had the right to claim western lands and what motivated this expansion, questioning if it was truly a divine mission or fueled by economic and political goals, including the desire to expand slavery. Using a mostly descriptive approach with some analysis, the study examines key events like the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the annexation of Texas, Alaska, the Philippines, and Hawaii. The findings show that Manifest Destiny was driven by a mix of economic, political, and religious motives. Americans justified their expansion through beliefs in racial superiority and a divine mission, which deeply influenced national policies and created a strong sense of American exceptionalism. Events like the displacement of Native Americans and the Mexican-American War were key outcomes of this ideology. The legacy of Manifest Destiny still affects American foreign policy today, highlighting its lasting impact on the nation's identity and actions.

Keywords: *Guadalupe Hidalgo, Manifest Destiny, Divine mission.*

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General Introduction

1 .Background of the Study

The term "Manifest Destiny" was first seen in writing in the early 1840's in an article titled "Annexation" and was later greatly popularized by Democrat James K. Polk. Although the term was not entirely new, it carried the concept of Jacksonian Democracy to new heights and through foreign policy, the United States of America strived to spread out over the entire continent claimed. Foreign policy makers at the time believed that the United States of America would be limited in international affairs power unless it could strengthen itself through territorial expansion. Steps were taken toward this goal with the annexation of Texas to the Union in 1845. Becoming an independent republic after a war with Mexico in 1836, Texas had intentions of becoming part of the United States of America, however, their requests were denied by Van Buren and Harrison. After the log cabin and hard cider, Polk became president, Texas was formally given an annexation bill, and became the 28th state of the Union on December 29, 1845. This annexation was the beginning of westward movement and United States of America expansion. With Texas in the Union, the United States of America had a direct conflict of interest with Britain over the Oregon territory and an even larger conflict with Mexico over much of the current United States of America southwest and west coast. About one third of the nation supported this Texan war, and it was a clear indication that the United States of America sought expansion.

As the dominant force in the western half of the North American continent, the United States of America played a key role in world affairs and experienced numerous social, political, and economic changes. One of the most notable characteristics of the United States of America was the uncanny ability it had to expand, thus leading to a movement westward. However, one particular portion of this expansion had a significant impact on the course of United States history. Coined "Manifest Destiny," it became an ideology with national direction and forged the ahead

for westward movement and the ratification of Texas to the Union. Manifest Destiny was a key component in the development of the United States of America and had long-lasting effects on the nation still visible today.

2 .Research Questions

The United States of America did claim and occupy land to the West. This was on the premise that the United States of America was the only republic on earth, the best form of government, and Americans a superior people with superior abilities and virtues. If the United States of America did occupy the land legitimately; that is by legal purchase, treaties, or all-out conquest is controversial. The Southwest was ostensibly gained by the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo at the end of the Mexican war. But it still smacked of annexation by conquest. Many would argue the United States of America had no rightful claim to the Mexican Cession and this territory doesn't really form part of the frontier thesis of Turner. The decision to acquire Alaska is a straight contradiction of Turner's argument that the existence of free land creates an incentive for Americans to move westward. In the frontier looking to the Pacific rather than the geographical frontier, the United States of America tried to purchase harbor rights around the islands of the Pacific and the Philippines and Hawaii were annexed after 1893 and 1898. This concludes with a question of learning from history about the conduct of United States of America foreign policy. how did Manifest Destiny influence westward expansion in the United States during the mid-1800s? and What role did cultural, racial, and religious beliefs play in shaping Manifest Destiny and its consequences?

The first question asks for the factors backing up and influencing the ideology. It seems modern historians can accept that there was an ideology, but they are markers as to what it actually was. Was it a plot by the Southern slave owners to gain land for slavery as Charles A. Beard most famously suggested? Did the expansion of the United States of America come as a natural course

of events by providence as James Polk saw it?

The research questions underlying this essay are: What influenced the manifest destiny? Did the United States of America have the right to claim and occupy land to the West? What effect has the ideology had upon American opinion and national policy? These are important questions for the historian as they raise issues of causation, empire, and identity.

3 .Literature Review

Historians like Frederick Merk and Julius Pratt took the nationalistic interpretation and made it more complex, nuanced, and multifaceted. Merk's classic study of Manifest Destiny, which first appeared in 1931, placed the ideology within the context of the rise of democracy, stating that "from the outset, the movement for the annexation of Texas had some of the features of a war of conquest." The proof of that was President Tyler's act in getting a joint resolution through both houses of Congress, after the news of the battle of San Jacinto had been received. But the question of annexation was a complex of idealism, self-interest, and party politics, emphasizing the magnitude of the economic, social, and political elements of the Texas annexation question and the role that partisan politics played in the expansion of the annexation movement. Merk made it quite clear that he regarded the annexation of Texas as an expansionist venture. In 1964, he released his study of the annexation of Texas, which has been called a "scholarly impact of tremendous importance." This second work was an exhaustive study of the politics and personalities that influenced the annexation movement, painting a picture of the powerfully felt issue involved distant from the romanticized "racial destiny" angle of United States of America expansion. The remarks of other historians have added depth to an understanding of the nationalistic imperative. Charles Julian Bishko, a specialist in medieval and Spanish-American history, referred to the United States conceptions of its civilizing mission in global terms, placing United States of America expansion and the policies of acquisition of territory within a context

that reflected the experience of that of contemporary Western European colonial and imperialist powers. He also emphasized under McKinley and Roosevelt the beginning stages of United States of America involvement in hegemonic politics with Europe and Latin America, marking a departure from isolationism. Recent years have seen various attempts to resurrect Manifest Destiny in modern guise, primarily focusing on how it reflects United States of America foreign policy objectives. The historiography of the war with Mexico has continued to be as lively as that which surrounded the war years. Early 20th-century historians obviously regarded the conflict as a war of Northern Aggression by which the South sought to piggyback slavery into the annexation of new territories. During the 60s and 70s, the United States of America war in Vietnam was on the minds of many historians who wrote on the topic, some wondering whether, in light of United States of America cold war objectives, that United States of America policy of Mexico in the 19th century was similar to United States of America policy towards Third World countries, and others drawing direct parallels between the two wars .

4 .Aims of the Study

The present study aims to examine the role of ideological factors in the movement for American expansion. Historians have often devoted little attention to the role of differing value systems in the westward movement and the conflicts spawned as a result. Too often they take for granted the fact that Americans would benefit from expansion, and assess the consequences in material terms. American expansion was achieved through the conquest of a continent, that in turn involved the violent subjugation of native and Mexican peoples. Now if it can be shown that Americans at each period believed that they were acting in the best interests of the world, then perhaps there is some weight to the argument that they were bound to expand. If this was the case, then it is important to consider the broader cultural and ideological forces driving them onto the frontier. Measures of expansion were often hotly contested, particularly those in violation of

foreign territories; the more we can show a conscious design to annex new territory, the stronger the case that expansion was inevitable. The armed forces of the United States are not immune from public opinion and political pressure. If it can be shown that at any given time that a significant proportion of public support was behind conscious moves to annex new territory, and that political groups were able to manipulate government policy in that aim, then it has to be considered that the adherence to measures of annexation were a result of genuine belief in the necessity of expansion. By attempting to demonstrate these points through an examination of the beliefs of a wide range of different social groups at each period, and the nature of political decisions behind measures of expansion, we can show that the movement onto the frontier was never an aimless process, and generally achieved with success what was intended. An examination of the various conflicts with other nations and native people will be left to subsequent chapters.

5 .Significance of the Study

In the existing literature, there are a few fine recordings of the popular or official opinions on the questions of expansion and the westward movement; very little has been attempted in the way of an analysis of the real significance of the movement. The whole meaning of the westward movement, its history, its effects upon the American social and economic system and upon the American character, is past and potential, is yet to be written. The westward movement is an important phase in the history of the United States; it was the most significant and far-reaching American experience which we have to record. It was a period of discovery and of real expansion into the national domain. The American Revolution was the political act of a generation of English colonists, who, in their dislike and fear of the complex, distant, and burdensome British system of government attempted to construct a new and free society in the East.

6. Research Methodology

This research examines the ideological and historical perspectives of Manifest Destiny and

the Westward Movement in the United States, using a predominantly descriptive approach with some analytical insights. The study relies on online articles and trusted websites, including academic journals and historical databases, to gather information. Key historical events, figures, and policies are summarized, while the ideological motivations behind these developments are interpreted through a thematic analysis of concepts like nationalism and exceptionalism.

To ensure reliability and validity, multiple sources were cross-verified, focusing on academically recognized content. The research is grounded in historical and ideological frameworks, providing a nuanced understanding of the 19th-century American expansion. Ethical standards were upheld by accurately representing information and avoiding plagiarism. This methodology offers a solid foundation for exploring the significant era of westward expansion through credible and reliable online sources.

CHAPTER ONE

Manifest Destiny: Definition, Origins and Opposition

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Introduction

In this chapter we will see how the concept of Manifest Destiny is deeply ingrained in the history of the United States, representing the belief that the nation was destined by a higher power to expand across the North American continent. This chapter explores the many facets of Manifest Destiny, including its origins, ideological foundations, and the opposition it faced. Let's start by diving into the concept itself and tracing its evolution over time. In his message to President McKinley and the Boston Patriotic Association, L. T. Townsend says that "Manifest Destiny" is a phrase capable of quite diverse meaning. But in our country at the present time is considerably restricted in its application. (Townsend L. T. 1898. p 01). To truly understand Manifest Destiny, we need to consider the broader historical context of the 19th century United States. We'll explore the political, social, and cultural factors that contributed to its rise as a dominant ideology.

1.1 Concept of Manifest Destiny

The phrase "Manifest Destiny" was generated by the democratic editor John L. O'Sullivan to illustrate the moral right of the United States of America to spread from coast to coast. The phrase wasn't a new idea or belief, but it was the first time to be given a name and backed by government policies. This title contained many thorny policies and ideas that the United States of America would undertake between the times of Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk. It was a phrase that had an inherently racial quality that was attractive to many Anglo-Americans during this time period. The United States of America had much racial pride towards the Anglo-Saxon race and felt that it was their duty as a race to lord over the lesser races of the world. This came to play most dominantly when the United States of America instigated war with Mexico. It was a common conception that the Mexicans were a lesser race and the territory that they occupied was rightfully the United States of America 's. Due to the racist tendencies of the time period, the term Manifest Destiny was generally supported by the Anglo-Saxon race, but it was not completely limited to one race. The religious quality of Manifest Destiny was an idea that was particularly

intriguing to the American people of all races. Many were fervent believers in Protestantism and felt that it was their duty to Christianize the world. There were also many Catholics in the United States of America who held similar ideas of spreading their faith. The idea of spreading religion had little to do with racial conquest, but it was more so considered an act of benevolence to spread what were perceived as superior ways of living to the inferior races of the world. Lastly, there is Manifest Destiny in terms of expanding the American influence beyond the North American continent. This notion was held mostly by the more educated and intellectual Americans who still had their eyes on global imperialism (John L. O'Sullivan | a Continent Divided: The United States of America Mexico War, n.d.) (Redirecting, n.d.) .

In terms of foreign policy, there was some success regarding the United States of America 's aspirations to expand the American empire beyond North America. The idea of purchasing Texas had objective ties with Manifest Destiny as Texas was already settling with Americans, but due to it being part of the vast

Mexican Empire, it was an informal aspect of the United States of America 's expansion. Nonetheless, the admittance of Texas was a clear manifestation of Manifest Destiny which led to the Mexican-American War. This war was the epitome of Manifest Destiny and had garnered much debate amongst the American people of the time. Although the United States of America gained a good portion of land from Mexico, the war was highly criticised by some of America's greatest luminaries such as Abraham Lincoln, who knew that the war was just a means to escalate the slave issue and felt that the country was losing its morals (McCall, 2020).

1.2 Historical Context

The concept of Manifest Destiny was in existence well before the 1840s and was officially documented in 1840 by John O'Sullivan, a journalist from New York. This term gained prominence during a period when the United States felt threatened by British encroachment from

the north and the potential annexation of the independent republic of Texas. The annexation of Texas was seen as a violation of the prior agreement not to acquire it. However, the 1844 presidential election victory of James K. Polk, who was in favor of expansion, provided a clear mandate for the annexation of Texas and the reoccupation of Oregon. The Democratic Party strongly supported this expansion and believed in popular sovereignty, while members of the Whig party dismissed it as a land grab benefiting only the wealthy. The debate surrounding expansion was multifaceted and engaged the politicians of the time. The expansion of the United States' borders was considered a necessary step to escape the problems of war and overpopulation in Europe.

The historical roots of Manifest Destiny are found in the long-standing American tradition of territorial expansion. The United States had expanded and acquired new territories from the British, French, and Spanish and Native Americans, from the founding of the nation in 1776 to the end of the Mexican War in 1848. American settlers always had the desire for more land, as evidenced by the nearly constant movement westward by the population. From the early colonies, the frontier was the American West. The ethos of the time was idealistic. The mission of the United States was a special one of spreading civilization and democratic institutions over a vast area. The ideology of Manifest Destiny encompassed many things. It was a belief that God had chosen the American people to spread democracy and civilization around the continent. It was felt that expansion was predestined by Providence to fill the continent and that it was always America's destiny to become a continental nation.

1.3 Influential Thinkers and Ideologies

Since there was considerable debate in the United States concerning the western expansion, diverse opinions and ideologies arose from a variety of sources. The conservative and traditional dislike of the frontier environment was put most famously when John Quincy Adams asked, "What

do we want with this vast, worthless area?" This "factor endowment" theory deeming the North-East as superior in terms of educational and infrastructure as compared to the "wild" west led to policies characteristic of the sedentary society in which he believed to be the superior way of life. Other ideologies arose out of specific situations and locations. The South was most noted for its hesitancy in supporting the western expansion due to its fear of impacting on the balance of free/slave states. Southern politicians also did not want the western territory transformed into a land of small farmers with the homestead policy, as it would create competition for the small number of slave owners. This issue has led some historians such as Charles Seller to argue an economic perspective of the western expansion stating that the United States of America was pushed into the west out of necessity to solve certain national economic problems and to provide a greater life for the common man. Other more optimistic historians have suggested there was an underlying belief in the superiority of a free and equal America and what better place to showcase such an ideal than the frontier? Still this concept of a "liberty opportunity" was marred by racial overtones of Anglo-Saxon superiority and manifested in the prospect of a Union victory over Confederacy masses

running to claim free homesteads. This situation essentially promised Republicans victory in the Homestead Act and thus it can be argued that the nature of the Civil War sealed the destiny of these free-soil settlers. (Libretexts, 2022)

1.4 Opposition and Criticism of Manifest Destiny

From 1845, a coalition of Whigs and anti-slavery elements within the Democratic Party formed the new and deciding force in American politics. They were referred to as the "anti-duffer" faction and later, the "Barnburners". Their resentment of Polk's policies gave birth to a new Diplomatic historian. By studying American interaction with other nations, away from the domestic influences, he concluded that the annexation of Texas and the resultant war with Mexico

were primarily brought about by southerners and westerners, desiring to increase the scope and influence of slavery and to acquire new land for the spread of that institution. These actions were against the best interests of the nation and were devoid of moral considerations.

All ideology and movements will encounter some form of opposition. Although public opinion and territorial expansion became generally intertwined, the anti-expansionists did manage to influence the governance of the nation. Both liberal and conservative anti-expansionists used the rhetoric of social contract theory and Lockean principles to argue that the government did not possess the authority to annex and govern foreign lands against the will of the inhabitants.

1.4.1 Anti-Expansionist Movements

The title for this section would seem to indicate that there was some powerful entity that opposed territorial expansion. This is not really the case. However, there were a few interest groups and individuals that expressed their opposition to the acquisition of new territories. The Federalists were more or less against the idea of expansion because they felt it would weaken the central government. They were also prejudiced in that they felt the western territories would be settled by southern farmers who were political and economic rivals of the north. The most notable of the individuals that were opposed to territorial expansion was Abraham Lincoln. He was against the Mexican-American War as he felt it was a war of aggression against a weaker nation. The Whig party as a whole also had little enthusiasm for expansion because the spoils of western land would be difficult to divide among the northern industrialists and southern plantation owners (Fuchs, 1974) .

1.4.2 Ethical and Moral Arguments

The issue of morals and ethics appears prominently often in the supporters of the movement. Manifest Destiny had ordained this land for the spread of self-government and the perpetuity of the free institutions of men," claimed the Democrats in 1846. This was similar to the

Puritan belief of being an example to all the world. The United States, who from the beginning, had a strong voice in the abolition movement, soon also believed that it was destined to liberate Canada and Mexico from their oppressive masters, which would help spread the blessings of liberty and democracy. Those who feared imperialism and saw the aggressive Anglo-Saxon yoke as intolerant and lead to the persecution of other races frequently opposed this by claiming that Anglo-Saxons were a master race, and that in order to prevent interbreeding with the weaker races, it was best to keep moving on. Daniel Boorstin explains in *The Americans* that "shifting frontiers often excused a failure of nerve or of will, or the easy way out." He also notes the South's strong belief in the importance of cotton and says that the Southerners convinced themselves the movement was a God-given mission to spread slavery. Although many truths are revealed in this argument, something for the "want of the easy way out" was more often than not due to debates over slavery, and in the west, many politicians were beginning to see that slavery was irrational and inefficient in a free land. However, the ends do not always justify the means, and oftentimes the excuse of destiny was a cover for an act of expansion which would have been carried out destiny or no (i.e. the taking half of Mexico) (Fuchs, 1974) (Cooke & Boorstin, 1966) .

1.4.3 International Reactions

This part presents evidence of differing international perspectives toward United States of America expansionism, annexation of territory, and westward movement. Canada's position as one of the colonies that faced the impact of United States of America policy provides interesting insights. The most formative period in Anglo-American-Canadian relations was the late 1840s when the United States made its

final attempt to fulfill 'manifest destiny' as it applied to Canada. The result was the closest, short of actual war, that the United States and Canada had come to a showdown. While most of Canada was preoccupied by a movement to achieve greater internal unity and stronger ties with Britain, another overseas power had plans of expansion into Canadian territory. United States of America

policymakers viewed the possible acquisition for Canada to be the final measure in fulfilling the Manifest Destiny. Canada would prove to be a valuable addition to the republic. French presence in Canada had prevented various attempts to invade the territory from becoming an issue in American history. Now, with the annexation of Texas and war with Mexico, the issue was revived. With the Oregon boundary settlement with Britain unresolved and United States of America resentment of the permanent Canadian border, Anglo-American relations were tense. Europe viewed the Canadian border issue as part of Anglo-American imperialistic rivalry and viewed the United States of America expansionist policy and the potential conflict with Britain as a contribution to world unrest. Through the policy of the United States of America and reaction from Britain, Canada had learned that it required to maintain a strong independent security and defense policy. The Rush-Bagot agreement, which demilitarized the Great Lakes and provided security in the United States of America -Canadian border, was placed under a more permanent/tangible agreement and finally resolved the issue process of disarmament negotiation from the position of crisis. The late 1840s was the closest point in history where Canada would have changed from British to American sovereignty, with key impacts of the period being Canadian self-determination from continental issues and the movement in defining Canada as a separate entity to the United States of America. Europe has always viewed United States of America attempted annexation and aggression at Canadian territory as an act forcing with

legitimate ownership and has gained respect of United States of America recognition for Canadian sovereignty and its commitment to separate defense and foreign policy, which has been most demonstrated through both world wars. The period has also solidified Russian perceptions of United States of America imperialism and expansionism as a major security concern. Long-term sentiments from the mid-19th century have impacted previous historical interactions and general perceptions of United States of America policies (Ferrell, 1973).

Conclusion

In conclusion, our exploration of Manifest Destiny and the westward movement reveals a complex tapestry of passionate belief and opposition. As we've seen throughout this chapter, Manifest Destiny was a driving force behind American expansionism in the 19th century. However, it's important to note that this expansion was not universally embraced. Manifest Destiny faced significant opposition from different groups. Anti-expansionist movements, ethical and moral arguments, and international reactions all played a role in challenging the idea of America's divine right to expand. Despite this opposition, Manifest Destiny undeniably left a lasting impact on American history, shaping the nation's identity and trajectory. By understanding its origins, ideological foundations, and the voices of dissent that pushed back against it, we gain valuable insights into the complexities of American expansionism and its enduring legacy.

CHAPTER TWO

Manifest Destiny: Expansion and Motivations

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Introduction

This chapter explores the motivations driving the Manifest Destiny and Westward Movement, focusing on economical, political, religious, and cultural factors. By analyzing these influences, we uncover how visions of national destiny propelled movement from the East Coast ports to the vast Great Plains. From the Oregon Trail to the California Gold Rush, pioneers sought opportunity amidst challenges like Native American displacement, Mexican conflict, and the human toll of migration. This journey through Manifest Destiny aims to unravel American history's complex fabric and shed light on its lasting impact.

2.1 Economic Factors

A desire for wealth and prosperity played a key role in western expansion. As a nation developed, several prominent ideologies considered this movement as a necessity for the enhancement of the overall quality of life concerning its citizens. These specific ideals tend to correlate with success in terms of a grand scale, one of great social and economic change. This first step into a new era of progression of the United States is most evident through the resources devoted to essentially make the westward movement possible. This is apparent in the moneys spent to commission survey teams, the large numbers of adventurers "heading out west", and most obviously the means of enabling actual passage to the west through transportation discovery and expansion. The most prevalent example of this is the construction of the transcontinental railroad. This massive feat in engineering stretched known boundaries of possibility and connected the eastern and western fronts of the country. The completion of this railroad and the influx of people to the west in hopes of owning land and striking it rich inevitably led to the seeding of many towns and cities and laid the groundwork for the society and government in place today. Often perceived as the migration of unemployed or poverty-stricken individuals, many were attracted to the west as an opportunity to gain a better life while still being very capable of withstanding the rigors of

frontier life. This movement yielded the establishment of complex city systems and increased the rate of westward expansion. Evident is that the simple idea of then and now "moving west" has had a profound impact on society of both the past and the future (Westward Expansion: Economic Development (Article) | Khan Academy, n.d.).

2.1.1 Manifest Destiny and Economic Growth

By acquiring new territories, America had gained access to several new types of resources. First, there was the vast amounts of unsettled land. Although the land was physically taken by force in some instances, the acquisition of this land gave an opportunity for many Americans hoping to seek economic gain. This was seen as a sort of safety valve for the excess population in the East. Also, by attaining new lands, there came increased access to natural resources such as minerals, timber, and most importantly, the ability to cultivate cash crops. This would come to symbolize a chance to reinvent oneself, as well as the proof of the idea that the nation could achieve whatever it set out to.

With the acquisition of the Louisiana territory and the lands ceded after the Mexican-American War, Americans believed that they had fulfilled their destiny by occupying land that was rightfully theirs, and it was their destiny to do so. This belief was known as Manifest Destiny. Fueled by the rhetoric of expansionists and political leaders, this feeling was legitimate in the hearts of most Americans during this age, and the economic boom that America experienced during this time served as a proving ground for what was possible for the young nation to achieve.

During the 19th century, America was undergoing a transitional phase, from a newly formed country to a divided state of development. Since the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the process of America as a nation by the Constitution, the nation was torn between two identities: that of a fledgling republic and a blossoming empire (Heidler & Heidler, 2024).

2.1.2 Access to Natural Resources

The ideology of the Jeffersonian Republicans who idealized the notion of a yeomen farmer was a stark contrast to the reality of American indenture into the land. But it illustrates the optimism toward an agrarian society supported by equal land ownership. Farmers, however, were not the only ones whose livelihoods tied to the land. Ginon writes that territorial expansion at times of economic stress through the act of nation state was seen as a way to provide significant numbers of citizens with new land for cultivation and he provides a contemporary example in the French decision to take hold of the left bank of the Rhine in 1792. But in any definition of his term, it would be impossible to ignore the American motive of annexation of new territory during the periods between sectional divisions of the 1840s and 70s. New land would always be a means to an end for additional forms of economic enterprise. Ultimately, desires to fulfill promises of a better life and eventually a better life for a nation that has always viewed prosperity and happiness as a measure of success.

The Americans believed that their economy did not have to mimic that of Europe's. The push to fulfill what they saw as their national destiny and the need for a more effective way to do this were primary factors behind their move toward independence. The American economy was nurtured by the demands of an expanding population. The westward movement of settlers facilitated increased agricultural production, much of which was consumed by an expanding population as well as an increase in exports. The goal was to provide the most effective way of "Employing our time to the best advantage" (McLachlan, 2022).

2.1.3 Expansion of Trade Routes

In order to best understand the concept of expansion of trade routes as an economic factor in the context of westward expansion and its underlying themes, it is best to break down the concept of expansion of trade routes into a few key points that can be analyzed through the themes of westward expansion. The expansion of trade routes is enabled by two key factors that were

heavily promoted at the time through United States of America policy. The first was the promotion of production of commodities for a global market. This entailed producing goods that can be sold off in distant or international markets in order to bring in external revenue. The production of commodities usually required land, such as the plantation of cotton, sugar, tobacco, or other products. The goal of westward expansion was to make land easily obtainable for western farmers who had the potential to develop products that could be traded both on a national and international level. The annexation of Texas is a prime example of how westward expansion made land easily obtainable, as Texas had great potential to produce goods that could be sold in a global market. The second factor was the opening of new markets for United States of America manufactured goods (McLachlan, 2022).

2.1.4 Industrial Revolution and Westward Expansion

During the first decades of the 19th century, there were dramatic changes in agriculture and industry that made the West appealing to the millions of Americans who lived in the East. The United States was both land poor and capital poor compared to Europe, and it had a chronic shortage of labor for agriculture. The market revolution would spread from the industrial and manufacturing change in the United States of America from the 18th to 20th centuries. This led to technological innovations. The first Industrial Revolution, which began in the 18th century, was largely confined to Britain. Awareness of the British success in industrial growth led the United States of America to desire similar success. During a period of great change that began in the late 19th century, this second revolution led to the United States of America becoming one of the leading industrial countries in the world. This revolution changed the United States of America economy, society, and politics, creating the present-day superpower. The United States of America proved to be quite successful in industrial pursuits. The abundance of resources, including oil, iron, steel, and timber, made industrial success easy and obtainable. The discovery of the Bessemer process was a turning point for the United States of America steel industry. This had become an

essential industry by the late 20th century. The North had been the forerunner in United States of America industry for many years up until this period. With the vast resources available in the West, it was only a matter of time until industrial expansion would lead there. This time was the turn of the century, as Americans turned their eyes to the West, so too did the many industries. At this time, the United States of America was the world's leading wheat exporter, and this was in high demand in Europe, creating a profitable situation for many farmers. The United States of America would continue its highly successful agricultural run well into the 20th century. By this time, America was considering further expansion of an old idea from its past, manifest destiny (History, 2019).

2.2 Political Factors

Up to 1785, the country had been a collection of thirteen ex-colonies, with claims also to western lands, and held together by the Articles of Confederation. The Revolution, by setting up a new government in place of the old colonial one, had created one nation which was destined to take its place as such in the family of nations. The framing of the Constitution had decided the form of the government, and within a few years of this, various acts or series of events served in effect to settle the nature of the territory under its dominion and its frontiers within more or less the limits of the present contour of the territorial United States. Westward expansion and settlement by Americans might have taken in a much larger or a much smaller area, might have stopped short at some line short of the Pacific Coast or hills of the Far West. It might even have dissolved itself in the presence of the obstacle of diverse Indian nations, unsuited to form a stable frontier when savagery in large tribal areas had been the only mode of life. The fundamental requisite for the expansion of the nation as regards the actual acquisition of territory and its settlement by American citizens was that all the new lands should be within the command of the national government. So far as lands previously under European ownership were concerned, the

nature of the areas behind the Atlantic colonies was such that they were already poised on the threshold of this European-owned land and only needed a formal annexation to make them part of the same. The session of the Floridas and Louisiana by the European sovereigns was an inevitable result of the diplomatic and military supremacy already gained by the United States, and in the cases of the regions devoid of American settlement, the form of the transaction was a cession by treaty (Wikipedia contributors, 2001).

2.2.1 Government Policies and Westward Expansion

In the interest of brevity, specific information from 1800 on is not presented as it is too tangential. American progress in the late 1830s and early 1840s greatly damaged relations with the British. American desires for westward expansion led to conflict over possession of the Oregon Country, a large region between the 42nd parallel and the 54-40 parallel. In 1846, the Oregon Treaty would secure the land for the United States with the exception of Vancouver Island. By this time, the decision to annex Texas, and the victory over Mexico in 1848 had already set the United States of America on course for acquisition of an empire.

In 1830, the Indian Removal Act was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson. The Act provided for the exchange of Indian lands in the South for lands west of the Mississippi River. Although this was a voluntary act, the federal government used tactics such as the bribery of Indian officials and refusal to recognize tribal laws which led to Indians signing treaties which were not in their best interest. This act eventually led to the infamous Trail of Tears in which an estimated 4,000 Cherokees died while traveling west to the Mississippi. By the 1830s, the Cherokees were the most acculturated tribe, they had adopted a system of settled agriculture, developed a written language, and published a newspaper, the Phoenix.

In the years following the War of 1812, the United States of America pursued policies which would essentially remove all of the Indians from lands east of the Mississippi and push them into the Louisiana Purchase and eventually across the Mississippi. One of the earliest confrontations took place in Indiana in the Battle of Tippecanoe. In the years after the battle, General John Tipton, 72 soldiers and their families died during the construction of a government building built to honor Governor Harrison. They were buried beneath the building and the land was to remain theirs for a cemetery for ten years. In 1841, Tipton requested that the bodies be exhumed and the building demolished. This request was made to make the land available to be purchased by the state. Tipton said "I hope the time is not far distant when sunrise will look down upon no Indian and the sunset will look upon the grave of the last one."

Starting with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the United States began their policy of expansion through the application of a clear set of goals. The Ordinance created a vast territory north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River. This land was to be divided into three to five territories that would be admitted to the Union as states once certain requirements were completed. The requirements outlined a process in which the territories would be governed by appointed officials until the territory had 5,000 voting residents. At this point, the residents could form a legislative assembly and create laws. If the population of a territory reached 60,000, the citizens could draft a state constitution and apply to join the Union. This process would prove to be a successful means of expanding the nation. By allowing the settlers to become their own governing body rather than the extension of the original 13 states, it facilitated the breakup of the union into southern and northern states. Also, the fact that new states would be equal to original states undermined the concept of colonies. This is a typical example for a paragraph (The War and Westward Expansion (U.S. National Park Service), n.d.).

2.2.2 Acquisition of Territory through Diplomacy

The war with Mexico was concurrent with the fever of westward expansion. There were persistent rumors that California would be ceded to Britain, a situation manifestly intolerable in the eyes of expansionists. In addition, the annexation of Texas left Mexico with a particular bone to pick with the United States, providing a catalyst to war that was altogether pleasing to men like Polk, who saw in the issue a chance to acquire more Mexican land. The Mexican government also rejected an American delegation that was offering to purchase California and New Mexico for \$20-\$30 million. War was then declared not by the United States, but by Mexico, thus providing a tangible casus bello according to American apologists of the war. This series of events proved the acquisition of territory through war to be more a matter of circumstantial than premeditated policy.

The United States gained its first foothold in Oregon when a group of missionaries settled there in the 1840s, but the claims of the United States were challenged by much earlier British claims. At that time, Secretary of State Daniel Webster discovered that the British would be willing to cede Oregon if the United States would concede the annexation of Texas, a possibility both sides found desirable as a way of avoiding the dispute over Texas. Although Webster indicated a willingness to bargain on the issue, President Tyler, who saw Texas as his ticket to re-election, allowed negotiations over Oregon to approach a stalemate. Despite fervid cries for the "reoccupation" of Oregon, Polk's willingness to compromise proved too strong, and the prolonged joint occupation with Britain would come to an end only as a precursor to war with Mexico. (Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations - Office of the Historian, n.d.)

2.2.3 Role of Political Leaders in Promoting Expansion

At the political level, the fact that the United States was a union, a confederation, and a republic all at the same time helps account for the speed with which it grew and the manner of its growth. As a union, it swallowed up the small states by offering them a share in the government

and the vast and fertile public domain of the United States. This was an inducement to the states of the old northwest to enter the union, and it was a powerful lure to Canada, both in the Revolutionary era and again in 1812. To this process, compromise and civil war over the extension of influence and power, Europe had a partial parallel in the growth of the great powers, but in no case did one of the European states absorb its weaker neighbors so readily or so fruitfully as the United States did at the national and sectional levels. Either through annexation or through the purchase of territory from foreign powers, the United States acquired immense areas in which to experiment with its philosophy of territorial and economic democracy. The largest single acquisition was made in 1803 with the Louisiana Purchase. This transaction was promoted from the American end by the diplomacy and the threat of armed conflict of President Thomas Jefferson. Although he questioned the constitutionality of the purchase, he saw in it an opportunity of preserving an agrarian and yeoman society and of opening to the United States the entire interior of the North American continent. By doubling the area of the United States, the purchase made inevitable the later expansion to the Pacific and prepared the way for the agricultural and industrial development of the South and the West.

2.2.4 Westward Expansion and the Concept of American Exceptionalism

This belief was based on the second and more popular theme of manifest destiny, and often intertwining the concept of the mission and the destiny of the United States. It too was expressed in a variety of forms but with a basic set of shared beliefs. Manifest destiny emerged in the 1840s as a result of Americans acquiring new territories due to the belief in a still young and developing nation. At its core was the belief that the United States was preordained by God to expand across the continent and spread its form of democracy and freedom. This had a comprehensive and violent set of effects on the west and even areas outside of the continent. At the international level, manifest destiny provided the ideological support for the United States'

global strategic interests. As a result, the United States of America became more involved in world affairs in attempts to fulfill its destiny, which often ultimately resulted in warfare. An example of this was the 1846 United States of America occupation of Oregon, which led to a dispute with Great Britain over the Oregon boundary and the United States of America -Mexican War.

During the westward expansion of the United States, there were two popular beliefs that soon became separate factors in the movement. The first was that of the mission to spread the freedom and institutions of the United States across the continent. The second was the destiny of the United States, which involved not only territorial expansion across the continent but also involvement in global affairs. The belief of the mission of the United States was interpreted in a variety of ways. At the most basic level was the interest in promoting the western values that built the United States, such as the concept of limited government and religious freedom. Whether it was the federal government, fur trappers, or missionaries, all were part of a general idea that the western territories should not be under foreign control. There was a prevailing theme behind all these interpretations, which was the belief that the United States was fated to expand across the continent (America's Manifest Destiny | the American Experience in the Classroom, n.d.).

2.3 Social Factors

The 1830s and 1840s saw an expansion of migration as the westward movement resumed. The time of increased migration coincided with the Indian Removal Act and thereby, the migration was from both United States of America citizens and Indian tribes as the United States of America government sought to remove the Indians from Southern states to the west of the Mississippi River. Some encountered the tribes and witnessed their final days as independent people. Some actually joined the tribes in migration. California, taken from Mexico in late 1840s, marked an increased mixing with the Indian tribes. In some cases, as in the Southwest, the new settlers arrived at a time the Indian tribes were in decline. In terms of ecological impacts, the westward movement brought agricultural and herding technologies that had extensive impacts on the landscape and resources.

In the short term, Indians felt they could adapt these technologies from the newcomers while maintaining their culture and autonomy. This seldom happened. Usually, the Indian tribes were compelled to adapt and eventually assimilate under the dominant United States of America culture. In the long term, the increasing settlement and resource use by the newcomers often resulted in the dispossession of the Indian tribes and the takeover of their resources and land. This in turn often led to a loss of autonomy, culture, and well-being, and in some cases, extinction of the tribe as a distinct entity. In economic terms, the westward movement often brought dependency and hardship to the Indian tribes. Although across 40 years and a huge area, it is problematic to generalize about Indian Reaction to the westward movement, it is today often viewed with heavy connotations in United States of America history. This is in part because it was an early and foundational case of a dominant power expanding onto weaker peoples and often resulted in a loss of life and cultural decline for the weaker party. (Westward Expansion Social and Cultural Development - APUSH Study Guide 2024 | Fiveable, n.d.)

2.3.1 Population Growth and Land Availability

On another note, the various wars with the Indians also led to a great military experience and confidence among settlers which would be a large factor in the ability of America to push away competing European powers.

In contrast, Puritan settlers envisioned a yeomen society of small landowners with each family owning their own farm. They felt the best way to ensure English and Godly culture was to simply be separated from the corrupting influences of the old world. This led to a deeper conflict with the Indians over the land as the settlers now sought to simply purchase it. This contrast of varying land use and desire led to a great dispersion of the English and constant native attacks to reclaim their territory. The result of this was the near destruction of many Indian tribes and the

remaining ones being confined to ever-decreasing areas. This was the first of many instances of one culture being pushed away by another in American history.

Coming to America with a British mindset, the settlers of the New England and Virginia areas had very different views of the use of land in respect to the natives. Virginia planters sought to recreate the semi-feudal manor system of England with an aristocratic society supported by peasant farmers. This meant they sought to export English culture and create a stable society. It was because of this they saw the Indians as a problem to be cleared away from the land which led to sporadic warfare and many instances of displacements.

In the case of Virginia, it was tobacco cultivation that led to desirable land for a certain class of planters. In New England, the expansion was propelled by the search for better agricultural land. Throughout these movements, the settlers' mindset was to always proceed to the next "frontier". Now, with the land and climate being so different between the areas of New England and Virginia, settlers fanned out in widely separate directions which led to a consequence of the English being surrounded by the French and their Indian allies in the areas that they had dubbed the "mother country". This being one of the reasons why the English always had a tenuous hold on this contested ground.

Population growth and land availability are the two overarching themes in American westward expansion. From a numerically small start early in the 17th century, the population of the colonies increased rapidly. The English migration to and colonization of North America began in the late 16th century, but the first thirty years of the 17th century saw an exodus of settlers to Virginia and the New England area. This was due to the fact that those areas offered an escape from the constraints from England that some people regarded as a threat to their "freeborn" status (History, 2019).

2.3.2 Religious and Cultural Motivations for Expansion

The period beginning in the early 19th century and ending in the early 20th century was one in which great change came about in all aspects of American life, especially in the areas of technology, politics, and culture. Native Americans were influenced by these changes in all areas of life, and the interaction of the American people with the Indians would forever be altered. An event in this period that is mentioned as having great impact on Native Americans was the Homestead Act passage in 1862, which allowed for American citizens to occupy federal land in the west. This meant that as more and more settlers began to move westward, Native Americans would continue to lose their land and way of life. As the 19th century came to an end and the United States emerged as a world power, the Bureau of American Ethnology was founded in order to facilitate systematic ethnological research of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Although its appeals were met with great skepticism, the organization played a major role in the advocacy of Indian interests. This period of westward expansion and the events following it into the early 20th century are well-documented, and the effects on Native American life have been profound.

The religious aspects of American westward expansion are ably covered in the volume "Christianity and the American Empire". Robert Miller has edited a collection of essays examining the impact of religion on westward expansion entitled "Native American Book Review". Recommended reading for anyone interested in religion and westward expansion is "The Gods of Prophetstown: The Battle over Indian". For a study that is particularly concerned with the natives' encounters with various missionary groups, see Neal Salisbury's "Manitou and Providence" (Sheehan & Salisbury, 1983).

2.3.3 Role of Settlers and Pioneers in Westward Expansion

Settlers and pioneers were the main driving force behind westward expansion. These people were the first white inhabitants in many regions, and as a result, they were the first to create

a permanent white settlement in many areas. Their motives for doing so varied a great deal. Some moved west in the hopes of acquiring cheap land and thus improving their economic situation. For others, the west offered the opportunity to escape debts or other problems they faced in the east. Still, others sought to create a utopian or Christian community far from what they saw as the moral corruption of the east. A few settlers and frontiersmen sought to establish contact with western Indians and convert them to Christianity, while some simply wanted to engage in the lucrative fur trade. Despite their differences, all settlers sought to create a better life for themselves and their families, and with this goal in mind, they pushed American boundaries westward. This widespread belief that America had a "destiny" to control the entire continent solidified the identity of settlers as agents of American progress and improvement. The movement west destroyed many Indian tribes in its path and helped to firmly establish the United States as a coalesced nation rather than a confederation of separate states. The interaction between American settlers and Native American tribes often led to violence, as white settlers tried to push Indians from the land they coveted. During the 19th century, Indians were moved from the east and the Mississippi valley to lands west of the river. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 gave the President authority to exchange unsettled lands west of the Mississippi for Indian lands within state borders, and by the late 1830s, the only major tribes remaining in the east were the Cherokee, Choctaw, and the Seminole, who were forcibly removed in a migration known as the Trail of Tears. Measures such as these and many others further west led to the near annihilation of Native American culture and in some cases, the total genocide of entire tribes. The loss of land and livelihood was devastating to many Indian tribes, and the effects of westward expansion on Native American communities would be felt for generations to come (Wikipedia contributors, 2024).

2.3.4 Impact on Native American Communities

The mechanization of plowing and the chuck tip method are viewed as useful in breaking the hard dry ground of the Great Plains. Yet these methods took a deadly toll on the primary source

of nutrition for the Plains People, the buffalo. A combination of disease and market hunting resulted in the near extinction of the symbol of their freedom and way of life. From a population of 50-60 million in the early 19th century, the buffalo were nearly wiped out of existence with numbers totaling 750 in 1895. Hostile tribes were forced onto reservations in an effort to clear the way for westward expansion. Treaties with the governments of Canada and the United States were broken by European settlers as they moved into these lands for gold and furs. They feared that the Blackfoot, Sioux, and other aggressive tribes would side with the enemies of America in a time of conflict and were to be removed from areas around the international border so as to act as a 'buffer zone'. Further loss of land came with the passing of the Dawes Severalty Act in 1887. This act sought to break tribal mentalities that prevented advanced agricultural methods. A short-term allotment of land to individual members with the promise of citizenship for those who 'behaved' was to be followed by the process of integrating these now American citizens and surplus reservation land into the United States. An attempted revival of the Ghost Dance spiritual movement, which foretold the disappearance of the white man and a return of Indian lands and the old way of life, was met with fear and hostility.

A massacre of unarmed Sioux and Chief Big Foot's band at Wounded Knee in 1890 marked the close of the Indian Wars and resulted in the making of apologies six generations later by the United States of America government. In 1906, Churchill infamously stated in a speech to the House of Commons that Indians were "a subject people, heathen and backward and that it was a fallacy to think of them as having equal rights with other citizens of the empire". Such prejudices had come from the history of settlers and their descendants who viewed expansion as their divine right and evident in the 'closing of the frontier', a turn of the 20th-century idea which proposed that the source of America's greatness had been its expansion to the west and would be lost if expansion did not continue.

2.4 Technological Factors

The steamboat was a revolutionary form of transportation. It enabled savvy investors to create towns along the river which could now ship goods to big markets for less money. However, in terms of impact the steamboat was short lived; it could not travel upriver, and the many rivers had obstacles, so overland travel was required to get to the boat. This shifted the boat to being primarily a transport for goods, leaving the task of passenger travel to another evolving form of transportation, the train. The train was faster and more efficient than the steamboat as it could travel in nearly all conditions and was not confined to a permanent track. The train would become the main transportation to the west and still plays a role in western transportation, giving rise to the engine, which would later serve the following generations as the primary transportation to far and remote places. With the train, however, the task of pushing west still required much overland travel from the train stations, and in the mid-19th century roads were still not sufficient for travel and the automobile was yet to be invented, so this often still required a lot of transportation by horse. This was the first real use of the horse in western travel as his role in previous exploration and colonization of America had primarily been for the use of hauling cargo.

Advances in technology were critical to America's westward expansion. Many aspects of early technology and new inventions were what made it easier for Americans to move across their own continent, communications developments that connected eastern United States with the west, and some considerations of new technology that affected western settlers. The United States was seeing speeding changes in transportation during the 19th century. The mode of transportation which dominated America during its expansion was the steamboat. As more Americans began to move west, rivers were used as the primary source of transportation. This was especially true of the farmers, who could bring their entire crop to cities at the cost of only a few dollars per ton (Wikipedia contributors, 2024a).

2.4.1 Advances in Transportation and Communication

The most revolutionary form of transportation during this period was the railroad. The first commercial line was constructed in the 1820s, and by 1860, over 30,000 miles of track had been laid. Railroads almost single-handedly overcame the barrier of the Appalachian Mountains, vastly opening up interior regions of the continent to settlement and commercial development. For example, in 1842, it took 3-4 weeks to journey from New York to Chicago. By 1860, this trip could be made in 2-3 days. This advance in speed was so dramatic that never before or since has any technology or form of transportation reduced travel time by such a large margin. Due to the limited capital and credit available in the period prior to the Civil War, railroad expansion was largely facilitated by governments offering land grants and loans to private companies. The desired result was a comprehensive system of railroads linking the East and West, and North and South. Railroads gave rise to a large class of wage laborers and unskilled workers, and by 1860, the industry was the largest single employer in the country. All things considered, railroads can be classified as the most significant aspect of 19th-century American technology. Due to a high demand for transporting goods, the speedy nature of railroad travel, and an ability to make a continuous path, railroads offered the total package in transportation. It was the only technology of the era to achieve a true national presence, and its effects on the economy and westward expansion were both immediate and lasting.

Like several other forms of technology, those associated with transportation and communication progressed rapidly during the 19th century, vastly increasing the pace and ease of westward expansion. In 1800, the movement of goods across the Appalachian Mountains was virtually impossible, and a round trip to and from the Mississippi River was a six-month voyage. The first greatly successful canals began to cut travel time between the east and west by providing a smooth and continuous water route, free from natural obstacles. The Erie Canal, for example, cut travel time between Buffalo and New York from twelve days to seven. By 1860, over 3,000

miles of man-made waterways had been constructed in the North, with an additional 1,500 miles in the South. They helped to lower the cost of shipping freight between the East and West and set off a frenzy of canal-building in other regions (Wikipedia contributors, 2024a).

2.4.2 Role of Railroads in Facilitating Expansion

Easily the greatest impact the railroads had was on the creation of new markets and generating an industrial economy in the United States of America. With reliable and low-cost transportation, farmers could now transport crops across state lines and to the growing number of cities. Factories, no longer bound to water resources and specific urban centers, could now ship and receive goods, and locate anywhere there was a good supply of labor and raw materials. This newfound industrial economy and growth in agriculture were the precursors to the United States being recognized today as a major world power.

The addition of the railroads changed the face of the American West in a number of ways. The ease, speed, and low cost of transportation and communication were important factors in facilitating the growth of a unified nation into a major world power. The railroads changed the patterns of agriculture and land use, the economic life, and the political framework of the nation wherever they went.

Beginning in 1862, the addition of the railroads was not only considered the major advance in transportation during the rest of the 19th century, but it also supplanted the existing means in importance. The United States unsurprisingly led the way in railroad construction between 1862 and 1971. The Pacific Railway Act authorized the building of a transcontinental line that would join the eastern railroads with California's Central Pacific line. With the use of land grants and financial aid, the two lines were built until they met at Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869.

2.4.3 Inventions and Innovations Supporting Westward Movement

The significance of inventions supporting westward expansion was important to the growth of the nation, settlement to the west, and the dreams of a better life. There were many inventions that assisted in westward movement, though there were those that were small kinds of technology that contributed directly or indirectly to the advances in society at the time. The cotton gin was of great importance to the southern states in this respect, as it boosted their economy and increased the need to expand territorially further west into the United States. Since the late 18th century, many Americans wanted to build canals that would allow for transport and trade of goods to different areas across the United States, though the cost and the impractical nature of the plan prevented the construction of every major canal. The Erie Canal was finished in 1825 and was seen as a great success and the beginning of a transportation revolution in the United States. The successful founding and construction of the canal had led to a time in which 3000 miles of canals were built throughout the United States, but profits as well as state and local government support for canal-building projects ended by the 1840s. Although its time was temporary, canals had successfully linked the east coast with other states, as well as providing a cheap and efficient route to the west for many European immigrants to the United States who were seeking a better life. The successful transportation of many goods and people across the United States had a lasting effect on the culture of the Midwest and eastern states, which benefited from a more diverse consumer population and became a hub for many entering the United States looking for jobs and new life (Deitch & Deitch, 2001).

2.5 Environmental Factors

The rapidly westward expansion of the United States may very well leave one to believe that an essay based on environmental factors is trivial. However, that is not the case. Throughout the course of relocating east to west, the environment has played a huge role in shaping the history of America. Throughout the ages, many different discoveries have been made, giving clarification

and evidence towards historical events. By studying history using the evidence and discoveries made, a theory may be proposed in hopes of answering questions that have puzzled historians for ages. The evidence found within the environment supports different causes of the movement west for different groups of people. To support this claim, one must assess the damage that was dealt upon a landscape in order to gain a clear understanding of what may have occurred. This is to say, for example, differing between an area left damaged by a large-scale migration as opposed to an area left undisturbed. By assessing the damage dealt upon the environment, depth may be added to events in history that have previously lacked a potential explanation.

2.5.1 Impact of Westward Expansion on the Environment

The exploitation of the West's resources, such as land, water, game, and timber, often caused environmental damage. Irrigation and dry farming destroyed the sod and the fertility of lands and resulted in the loss of vast areas of the West to the production of food and fiber. This was often the beginning of a process of progressive resource depletion, rather than sustainable development of the environment. Grazing too was frequently done at levels which the land could not support, resulting in damage to riparian areas, invasion of noxious weeds, and eventual loss of public lands to private control. This was the case in the Southwest United States of America, where much of the land degraded as a result of grazing has never recovered to this day. Mining was one of the worst offenders with regards to environmental degradation. The push to find gold and other valuable minerals often led to the destruction of entire landscapes and the pollution of water resources. This was particularly the case in the Western United States of America, where there are countless examples. The mine in the picture is in the Rocky Mountains. It is not always easy, however, to conclude that resource exploitation as a result of westward expansion has been entirely detrimental to the environment. For example, predator control has often been prevalent in order to protect livestock, but ironically has led to an increase in deer populations in many areas.

This has resulted in an increase in deer hunting, providing a source of food and revenue for many rural communities. A complex web of environmental change from resource exploitation is difficult to untangle and can often have unexpected results (Dobson, 2013).

2.5.2 Utilization of Natural Resources

Dependence on the environment was especially strong among the Western settlements. The availability of land, and the land's potential for agriculture - measured in terms of rainfall, length of growing season, and soil quality - were long the principal attractants. Other types of utilization of the environment relate, historically, to the factor of expanding frontiers. Railroad building was undertaken partly in order to open new lands. Mining has always been closely linked to the need for metals and other mineral resources. As prospecting and mining spread to new regions, they brought permanent settlement and statehood. But the greatest proof of intense dependence on the environment lies in the history of western forests and water resources. High demands were placed on these resources from the late 19th century to the present day, and they have been over-utilized, if not depleted. The history of western forests and grazing as it relates to utilization of national forest lands and ranges is a case in point. By 1940, less than a century after settlement of the far west had begun in earnest, much of the West had entered a new phase of forest utilization and management which had far-reaching effects. Periods dating back to the late 19th century had brought depletion of valuable tree species and the occurrence of great forest fires. The Forest Reserves established in 1891 had signified realization of the extent of forest depletion and a desire for improvement in the form of forest conservation. Yet not until demands of the 20th century, influenced largely by the growth of western populations, had there taken place a surge in depletion of national forest timber, a rapid increase in grazing use, and occurrence of forest fires of such great frequency and intensity as to cause public alarm. This in turn led to development of new and stronger forest and range policies, and the present trend is toward utilization of these resources in manners which are not only economically sound, but are also protective and

perpetuating of the resources themselves. Such history is the history of American dependence on environment, and the path of development often leads from use to over-use and abuse, and thence to a realization of proper values and conservation measures (Dobson, 2013).

2.5.3 Conservation Efforts and Environmental Awareness

In contrast to the west, the east had conservation and environmental awareness thrust upon it. By the late 19th to early 20th century, the east had become highly urbanized and industrialized. It had been logged over almost entirely, mining had left scars upon the land and near the turn of the century, it had suffered two centuries of agricultural abuse. In 1911, it was decided that the eastern states had to come up with a compact to ensure further conservation and protection of resources. Known as the Eastern States Forest Compact, it was geared towards reforestation for the purpose of protecting water supplies and enhancing public health and welfare. This compact was the beginning of the conservation movement in the east. The damage done to its resources led to an awareness that unless action was taken, there would be no resources left to sustain its population.

The west had come to a realization that its extravagant use of nature's resources would eventually lead to resource exhaustion. The first national park, Yellowstone, belies the notion that the west did not sustain awareness and some extreme efforts to prevent resource damage and depletion. Mining and logging had been taking such a toll on western land that the government set aside vast tracts of land as "forest reserves." While these areas were initially meant for continued logging and mining, the conservation movement had been boosted by the realization that the west's resources could not endure such abuses. Measures were taken through the Newlands Act of 1902 to fund irrigation with the intent of efficient water use to restore eroded soil and depleted resources. The act led to the establishment of the United States Reclamation Service, now known as the United States of America Bureau of Reclamation. The intention of this service was to ensure the management and protection of these resources and lands. The passage of the Forest Management

Act of 1897 was an attempt to plan for resource sustainability with organized and expert management. By this time, it had become increasingly clear that certain resources were non-renewable and the act emphasizes the necessity of future resource.

When resources started to become scarce, there were efforts made to conserve these resources. Two different areas come to mind when addressing conservation efforts and environmental awareness. In the west, conservation was geared more towards the preservation of resources. The east, which had been settled for a much longer period, geared conservation and awareness towards the damage that was already done. In both cases, environmental awareness came as a reaction to the depletion and harm of resources.

2.6 Military Factors

The movement of settlers often led to direct conflict with the Native Americans of the region. Many times the settlers would move into lands that had been guaranteed to various tribes by treaties, or were lands recognized as territories of a certain tribe. The settlers would simply ignore these agreements and force the native inhabitants off of the land. These actions often led to war between the settlers and the offended tribes, and at times this war led to United States intervention in the form of military units being deployed to protect the settlers, or to take the land for the United States of America . The best example of the later was the Black Hawk War in Illinois, in which a faction of the Sauk tribe led by Chief Black Hawk sought to retake lands in Illinois that they had lost through a disputed treaty. This war was a turning point in United States of America military history which up to this time had focused on defense of the in eastern North America. The war saw extensive use of volunteer units composed of settlers and led to a large standing army being deployed against native tribes for the first time. The war resulted in the defeat of Black Hawk's faction, and a complete reorganization of the United States of America army to prepare for future conflicts in the west. An outgrowth of the Black Hawk War was renewed conflict

with the tribes of the southern United States over lands in Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida. This conflict led to both the reassignment of United States of America regulars to southern states, and the removal of several tribes to new territories west of the Mississippi (Pruitt & Pruitt, 2023).

2.6.1 Conflict and Conquest in Expanding Territories

During the westward expansion, the role of the military in the progression of expansion was prevalent. Until the early 19th century, Americans were constantly pushing west, seeking new lands and territories. Throughout this period, the military played a significant role in the development of the American frontier. The army followed closely behind settlers, creating forts from which soldiers would protect the settlers from Indian attacks and the threat of other nations seeking to take the land for themselves. The soldiers in the army at this time were sometimes settlers themselves, being employed as militia to protect their own towns in times of crisis. An example of this would be in John Sevier's career as a soldier. Starting out as a surveyor in eastern Tennessee, he quickly became involved in the army rising to the rank of Brigadier General in the revolutionary war. After the war he was appointed by President Adams as Major General of the state of Tennessee which was at the time a position in the state militia. Infantry units of the army were often employed to protect the settlers and forts, and also to conduct expeditions into new territories. An example of this was the Lewis and Clark expedition which was an infantry unit sent by Thomas Jefferson to find a passage to the Pacific Ocean, and to make relations with Native American tribes in the west. At other times, the army itself acted as settlers, moving into new territories as part of an overall strategy to claim the land for the United States (Pruitt & Pruitt, 2023).

2.6.2 Role of Military in Westward Expansion

The nature of westward expansion in the United States differed markedly from other forms of territorial expansion because it occurred mostly on the North American continent and

involved a negligible degree of direct colonization by the government of the home country. There was no acquisition of substantial territories by conquest as in the case of the Central and South American conquests by the Spaniards. There was no exchange of populations, no policy of plantation or exploitation of indigenous resources. American westward expansion was idealistically motivated. The early settlers who moved west were, with few exceptions, families who came from the older lands seeking economic betterment and the hope of independent livelihood. They were influenced by their lore and legends of the frontier with its promise of freedom from Europe's crowded societies and decadent institutions. They were intimately connected with the politics of the Atlantic seaboard states and were often moved to migrate by political convictions. In all cases they were, as they believed in themselves and as posterity has largely accepted them, pioneers of freedom, bearers of a superior civilization, and examples to the world in democratic institutions. It was in this sense that Thomas Jefferson said of the westward movement that "the course of empire is west." He meant that the development of the United States as a free nation with the institutions of real self-government was more feasible and believable in a westward movement than it would have been by mere European transplantation in the colonies.

While there were definite and at times expressed federal policies connected with several phases of westward expansion, it is best to think of American territorial growth as generally unconscious policy (The War and Westward Expansion (U.S. National Park Service), n.d.).

2.6.3 Protection of Settlers and Development of Frontier Defense

Ownership of land and progress towards a stable society were critical for most settlers. They had a strong belief in the right to individual and collective self-defense (Lamar 112). Cowboys and ranchers thought that the range where they grazed their animals was theirs by some unwritten law. Farmers came to believe that after breaking the prairie sod, they had the right to keep free from harassment and to enjoy the fruits of their labor. These various expectations spelled

a need for protection in the form of land and people. In the end, the pool of military experience gained in providing border defense to an expanding frontier would culminate in the 20th century with American readiness to fight overseas wars of global reach, but that is beyond the scope of this particular history. Regular troops were the last guarantee for protection of settlers and almost by definition, the marginal and mobile character of frontier life was seldom conducive to ideal troop deployments. Settlers in Texas were plagued by Indian and Mexican raids on their homesteads, farms, and small towns. The army set up a line of forts to provide protection, but men were frequently lured away from post duty to pursue the raiders against orders. American expansion to the Great Plains and beyond after the Civil War brought continual border warfare with various Indian tribes from the late 1860s to the final major armed resistance of the Northern Cheyenne to incursions on their territory in 1878. The most effective protection was also one of the last facets of frontier military experience: the settlers' self-defense. This was realized through mobilization of state national guard units drawn largely from ranger and cowboy types, with or without formal federal service to supplement federal army troops and in rare instances as with the Texas Rangers, no federal troops at all.

2.7 Cultural Factors

As the westward movement transformed American society through the turn of the century, the society has had an equally powerful effect upon the culture both high and low of the nation. For American art, the westward movement inspired a distinct frontier genre and provided subject matters that would be considered classics in American art today. The high point of historical art of the westward movement was not reached until the movement was drawing to a close. Turner's famous Frontier Thesis portrayed the frontier's impact on American society and American art and had great influence on the historians as well as the artists. The movement also provided a great deal of inspiration for illustrators and has left a rich legacy of western illustration. But the art movement of the westward movement was largely eclipsed by its more popular counterpart, western film.

The westward movement helped shape the American character and define the nature of American culture. The United States developed from an isolated, dependent society into a self-confident, self-reliant nation as a result of the westward push. America's westward expansion has had deep implications on our national identity. The concept of a movement westward has been a powerful cultural symbol and has been linked to the dominant themes of the nation's history: the dispossession of European settlers from their better land and the opportunity to improve their condition by moving west. The westward movement has been a route to power and bettering oneself. For diverse groups and individuals united only by the decision to live beyond the settled land and begin again in the west, the westward movement has embodied opportunities for success as well as tragedies of displacement. All in all, it has provided a rich source of materials for the expression of what America is and what it is to be an American, both for contemporary residents and for future generations looking back at the nation's past. This affects our view of the past, present, and future and willingly or not has played a role in developing a national identity (Massip, 2012).

2.7.1 Influence of Westward Expansion on American Identity

Answering a number of critics who are sceptical of the importance of the westward movement, Frederick Jackson Turner wrote in 1893, "The most decisive hour of the West has come. In recent years it has been a question of yes or no on one point: Shall there be a frontier, or has it gone? Now that the census has closed the area of the country free from the frontier line, America can no longer evade an issue that is as old as the republic, and that has had a decided shaping influence upon it—the question of national character." From Turner's time forward, historians and other scholars sought to determine the effect of expansion on American society. One school of thought held that the experience of the frontier was inherently individualistic, and that the freedom of the frontier broke the constraints of custom, and that the reliance on the age of

a wilderness environment of sparse resources, a heterogeneous population, and the relative absence of institutions of social control, lead to a society that was individualistic, materialistic, and pragmatic. More generally, western society as a whole has been described as almost constantly in the grip of economic depression, with a culture conditioned by the massive availability of land and the scarcity of labor, and an egalitarianism given by the ease of achieving economic success. But whether in the eastern or western states, most historians agree that the majority of white Americans were not of the Henry Thoreau type, and were not content with a rural environment. School teachers and missionaries were notoriously itinerant, and their efforts to reproduce eastern institutions on the frontier were persevering. The end result of the movement of easterners to the west was the complete transference of the political, economic, social, and even cultural institutions from the east to the west, with the exception of those institutions specific to dealing with issues of land and resource availability. With the loss of their "safety valve," several generations of Europe also migrated their various institutions to an American west, making a lasting impression of Americans of all ages and their concrete American environment; an environment that was often more European than American. This last set of conclusions offers an explanation of the depression of the west relative to the east, the poverty of the antebellum South, and the failure of reconstruction of the old Confederate states. In terms of the effect of expansion on the formation of a unique American identity, the most notable characteristic attributed to frontier experience was that it promoted the intellectual and practical traits of dominance, individualism, energy, and optimism. The continual renewal and renaissance of opportunity to move and change social status uprooted European institutions of settled habits and a static society. Americans were forged to be a "nation of self-made men" (Massip, 2012).

2.7.2 Art, Literature, and Music Reflecting the Frontier

As moving to the West became more common in the 1800s, Americans sought to justify what they were doing. They wanted to know that this westward expansion was beneficial to the nation, and they needed to validate their actions by finding evidence that they were leaving a positive mark on history. The American people started to look towards artistic expression to understand the effects of westward migration. They thought that in time, art and literature would celebrate their mighty advance over the continent and inspire future generations to follow their path. The art of the era often painted the migrants as heroic figures, "conquering" the wild landscapes and "savage" Native Americans. These works stressed the bravery and determination of the pioneer. The reality of the pioneer experience may have been far less noble and romantic, but these paintings helped to solidify the pioneer as a key figure in American identity. Even in the 20th century, art has continued to portray the frontier in much the same manner as Americans in general. These heroic images of the past still hold an important place in national memory and mythology (Onion, 2019).

2.7.3 Formation of Western Legends and Myths

The hard riding cowboy and the gay singing cowhand have served as American sports in a huge migration. Each in search of an image and a satisfaction for his aspirations have taken to the Western form of cattle raising. Here they have found many conditions strange to them but native to novel readers. They have lived in cow camps decked with Navajo blankets and hot with the imitative carving and painting of Western interior decorators who for years made their living by selling the a re-create the one-about of a frontier which was rapidly disappearing. Filling a demand for tales of a vibrant reality which seemed more and more remote and of a life which in the scheme of things was hardly more than a fleeting episode both journalism and literature have

perpetuated the cowboy and his activities. Camp fire (1922) by Henry Herbert Knibbs may stand as the best synthesis of the Western story. And while no one has yet succeeded in putting to bust or to canvas an authentic statue of the bronco buster he too is an heroic figure in the lore of the American people.

The popularisation of the romance of the West was in large measure the work of promoters who, exaggerating a given set of circumstances in the interest of some locality or railroad, published stories which reflected the desired image. Jesse James, Billy the Kid, and others drew the attention of newspapers which gradually developed the detective story and published feature articles. Out of this material and the dime novel came the Western in a new and extremely popular form of literature and drama. Although some of it was the work of artists who had been on the frontier, the majority of it was created by men who had never been west of the Hudson River. Later Western movies were to have considerable genuine frontier background to offset the fantastic and the unrealistic; but by that time the motion picture and the radio had created still other forms of Western hero. The Western is the one type of American legend that has no counterpart in Europe and it still exerts a considerable influence even upon those who know the real West only through books (Onion, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the westward movement of the United States was driven by the promise of economic opportunity, political power, and divine destiny motivated Americans to venture into new territories and expand their nation across the continent. However, this expansion was not without its challenges and complexities. Native American displacement, conflict with Mexico, and the hardships of westward migration left a negative impact over the triumphal narrative of Manifest Destiny. The westward movement had an everlasting mark on American history, shaping the

nation's identity and landscape in profound ways. By understanding the motivations behind westward expansion, we gain valuable insight into the complexities of American expansionism and its impact on the nation and its people.

CHAPTER THREE

Legacy and Historical Perspectives

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Introduction

In this chapter, we explore the historical interpretations of the Manifest Destiny and Westward Movement, aiming to reveal how these events continue shaping American identity and its perceptions today. We begin by examining contemporary views and academic reevaluations of these movements, analyzing recent debates and interpretations that illuminate their ongoing significance. Additionally, we investigate their influence on American identity, examining how these events have shaped national narratives and collective memory, from the frontier spirit to the complexities of migration. Lastly, we reflect on the lessons drawn from this history and consider their relevance in current discussions on issues like cultural diversity, and national identity.

3.1 Legacy and Historical Perspectives

From an historical perspective, the Westward Movement and Manifest Destiny were extremely important organic ideologies that emerged directly from the developing American political, social, and religious experience. They were as vital to national growth as the constitutional and political structures that enabled the government to function efficiently. Without an over-arching vision such as those two ideologies supplied, the Republic might have fragmented and dissolved into a series of weak and untenable successor units much like the short-term fate of the Latin American colonies following their disruption of ties to Spain.

The Westward Movement and Manifest Destiny stood as powerful pillars in shaping the destiny of the United States, emerging from the depths of its rich historical tapestry. These ideologies played a central role in propelling the nation forward, transcending mere political and social spheres. Their significance mirrored the very essence of national progress, foreshadowing an era of unprecedented expansion that would echo through the annals of time. By embracing these profound visions, America solidified its unity and transformed its potential into a resolute

force, forging a path that stood strong against the forces of fragmentation and disintegration. Like the ebb and flow of a mighty river, the Westward Movement and Manifest Destiny navigated America through treacherous waters, steering it away from the treacherous pitfalls that plagued the fate of Latin American colonies after the severing of ties with Spain.

The ideology and movement that are labeled Manifest Destiny and Westward Movement have monumental legacies in American history. The contiguous United States are unique in that their nation-building history involves no real external enemies. International wars have largely been confirmed to fighting over the perquisites of global power, not struggles over the survival or destiny of the United States. The era of the American Revolution has become fused as the national “beginning.” Civil War events are encapsulated as the struggle over the nation's character and internal organization. In a sense, the United States' history is a story of inexorable westward movement or of a succession of waves of internal migrant colonists carrying with them an assured sense of a special, favored national “destiny.” The concept of Manifest Destiny, which dictated that it was their divine right and duty to seize and cultivate the land from coast to coast, has been given some sense of legitimacy with the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and the colonization of Texas and Oregon. The United States implemented strategies to ensure its own survival and expansion, such as the passage of the Homestead Act, the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, and the removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands. This westward movement not only shaped the physical landscape of the country, but also forged a national identity and character that has had a lasting impact on American society and politics. (The Legacy of Westward Expansion: Historical Memory and Contemporary Perspectives, n.d.)

3.2 Modern Interpretations

A second approach has been to understand expansion in terms of internal development, wherein the lands of the West were acquired less from interest in territorial or agrarian expansion than from concern for the unity of the nation and the development of the internal market system. This interpretation had an institutional basis developed by Richard B. Morris and Gordon S. Wood, who argued that expansion was in large part the result of the workings of the American federal system. Writing well before them, Louis Hartz, in *The Liberal Tradition in America*, showed that the West "joined the rest of the country in making ideas into institutions and creating out of common beliefs a framework of political freedom and social pluralism." These ideas were further incorporated by Thomas McCormick in *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War* and applied to the more recent period having separated the process into three stages: "first, the consolidation of the continental base, symbolized by Manifest Destiny and the theme of the Pioneer; then the acquiring of overseas possessions, the era of the Imperialist; and finally the effort to structure and redefine the entire free world, the epoch of the World Leader."

Various strands of historical scholarship have placed upon the concept of Manifest Destiny more modern and sophisticated interpretations than its past reputation warrants. First and foremost, it is crucial to acknowledge that Manifest Destiny was far more complex and multifaceted than its outwardly expansive and occasionally aggressive nature suggests. In the enlightening work "Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History," Frederick Merk argues persuasively that while the terms associated with Manifest Destiny may have appeared simple, they possessed intellectual roots that were deep and respectable. Merk demonstrates the interconnectedness of Manifest Destiny with the enduring faith in progress that propelled individuals forward and upward, firmly tying the ideological foundations of American expansion to other profound forces that shaped American life (DeConde, 1963).

Building upon Merk's assertions, Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., in his influential work "New Viewpoints in American History," reinforced the belief that the westward movement represented just one visible facet of a far more significant national development. Schlesinger posits that America, guided by a benevolent Providence, was fulfilling its rightful destiny. He further emphasizes that this wider perspective places Manifest Destiny within a broader historical context, highlighting the overarching importance it held in shaping the nation.

Adding another layer of insight, Perry Miller, in his philosophical exploration "Errand into the Wilderness," introduces the notion that the impetus behind this inexorable drive – which stands as the dynamic force throughout American history – finds its roots in a profound sense of destiny. This transcendental sanction draws specifically from the unique virtues inherent in the American people, supremely manifested in the Puritan ethos.

These various interpretations shed light on the multifaceted nature of Manifest Destiny, offering a more nuanced understanding of its historical significance. Consequently, they challenge the prevailing notion that Manifest Destiny was simply an uncomplicated expansionist ideal. Instead, they show that it was intricately intertwined with deep-rooted beliefs in progress, providence, and distinct societal virtues, elevating its societal and historical influence to unprecedented heights.

3.3 Impact on American Identity

The impact of the West on American identity is easily comprehensible and undeniable, especially in a setting of unfathomable and swift territorial expansion. The undeniable fact that a considerable portion of the Transappalachian and Trans-Mississippi West was an expanse of untamed and unconquered land, not subjected to any form of colonial domination or control, added weight and significance to the deeply ingrained belief in an unparalleled and distinctive heritage

rooted in the frontier. The conspicuous absence of a commanding metropolitan power imposing its cultural and ideological values from above had a profound effect, as it empowered and enabled settlers to leave an indelible mark upon the land, forever encapsulating the ideal of self-determination. It is undeniable that through this process, they fortified and reinforced the pervasive conviction that collectively, America possessed an extraordinary, democratic, and fiercely individualistic identity, traits that were almost self-evident to every common man and woman in a nation that enshrined and glorified westward expansion as one of its fundamental and defining forces. Consequently, the commons, the ordinary individuals residing in the West, transformed into integral stakeholders in the extensive and relentless quest for territorial aggrandizement. Their deeply entrenched communitarian values were impeccably reflected in the way they deified and lionized the West as the unequivocal "people's country." In a manner that should not provoke any astonishment, historians from all walks of life, without exception, have passionately and meticulously demonstrated and elucidated the myriad and diverse ways in which popular culture wholeheartedly embodies and encapsulates these underlying, intricate, and multifaceted social and political structures.

The movement west has not only played a crucial and defining role in shaping the American national identity, but it has also had a profound and lasting impact on the nation as a whole. The West, with its vast expanses and untamed wilderness, has come to symbolize a climate of youthful exuberance and boundless opportunity, forever associated with the daring and adventurous spirit of pioneer life. It represents a haven for those who seek refuge from a society they perceive as oppressive, attracting small-t liberals who yearn for a sense of liberation and free expression.

Moreover, the West has become the preferred arena for countless cultural touchstones. It serves as the backdrop for gripping commercial, detective, and romantic dramas that captivate

audiences with their tales of triumph, redemption, and forbidden love. The iconic imagery of the West holds a prominent place in the collective American memory, forever etched in the annals of history. While the South may lay claim to traditional etiquette and mannerisms, it is the West that reigns supreme when it comes to ceremony and spectacle, captivating the imagination with its countless films, parades, rodeos, and fairs.

These seemingly trivial portrayals of the West bear immense significance when it comes to shaping individual and collective identities. It is through these images, symbols, and activities that people derive a sense of belonging and purpose. The allure of the West is such that even immigrants, drawn to the bustling cities of New York and Chicago, yearn to experience the magic and essence of the West as newcomers to America. They are eager to immerse themselves in its unique flavor, soak up its vibrant ambiance, and embrace the spirit of adventure that it embodies.

In conclusion, the impact of the movement west on American identity cannot be overstated. It has left an indelible mark on the nation, shaping the very essence of what it means to be an American. The West represents dreams fulfilled, barriers overcome, and aspirations realized. It is a land of opportunity, resilience, and hope—a symbol of the American spirit. Whether through the lens of history, cinema, or personal experience, the West continues to enchant and inspire, serving as a testament to the enduring legacy of the American frontier (Massip, 2012).

3.4 Lessons Learned and Relevance Today

The first and foremost lesson that can be derived from an in-depth study of western expansion is the crucial understanding of the term "Manifest Destiny". Originating in the year 1845, this distinctive expression effectively encapsulates the profound goals and enduring values of that era, resonating deeply with the prevailing concept of American exceptionalism, which firmly believed that the United States was an exemplary model for the entire world. Since time immemorial, Americans have perpetually embodied a civilization in motion, ceaselessly yearning

for fresh opportunities and unwaveringly embracing unprecedented challenges. Throughout the annals of their remarkable history, they have relentlessly journeyed westward, surmounting all boundaries presented by the majestic Appalachians and triumphantly forging ahead towards the majestic Pacific, thus gradually transforming the United States of America into the resplendent beacon of a transcontinental nation. In our contemporary era, this same unyielding spirit of audacity ignites the hearts and minds of Americans to passionately venture into the uncharted realms of outer space. Similar to the unparalleled achievements of the illustrious Apollo space program, the awe-inspiring saga of westward expansion eventually reached its culmination point, marking an abrupt conclusion when the extraordinary vision of attaining a tranquil, peacetime transcontinental unitary state was masterfully accomplished.

The teaching of western expansion to today's students, especially in the context of a course called "The Making of Modern America, 1865-Present," presents an excellent opportunity to address several important developmental issues and to allow students to learn the valuable lessons of history. By exploring various facets of this period, students can gain insight into the nation's complicated past, particularly in terms of its racist tendencies and the challenges of assimilating racial and ethnic minorities. Additionally, they can delve into the profound influence of religious groups while examining the complex relationship between church and state. Moreover, they can explore the intricacies of population growth and the inner workings of an agricultural society, alongside the emergence of big business and the development of the free enterprise system. Lastly, the study of westward expansion enables students to comprehend the significance of the Constitution and immerse themselves in the riveting tales and adventures of those who lived under its guidance. Given that America has consistently been a nation on the move, the exploration of westward expansion proves to be an ideal vehicle for addressing these significant issues, fostering critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the nation's history.

Conclusion

In closing, the legacy of the Westward Movement and Manifest Destiny extends beyond these historical events, deeply influencing the American national identity and societal values. These ideologies fostered a sense of unity and purpose, driving the nation toward the expansion and development we know today. The profound belief in progress and the divine right to expand not only shaped America's physical landscape but also its cultural and political principles. Modern interpretations reveal the complex nature of these ideologies, emphasizing their intellectual roots mainly and help us better understand the national identity, societal progress, and the complexities of American history.

General Conclusion

Studying the history of the United States involves exploring Manifest Destiny and westward expansion, investigating their effects on ecology, politics, society, and culture, and understanding the motivations behind these movements, from economic opportunities to a sense of divine mission. However, these events often carry a sense of shame due to the suffering of Native Americans and other affected groups. The lasting impact of Manifest Destiny continues to influence how Americans view themselves and their nation today, therefore, we need a more critical examination of this era to uncover new insights and important details to have a clearer image about these ideologies. Nonetheless, this study faced challenges because historical sources can be biased, making it difficult to differentiate between ideology and actions, how Americans perceive and act. Moreover, focusing mainly on American perspectives risks neglecting the viewpoints and experiences of other groups affected by westward expansion. For future research we should adopt interdisciplinary approaches and compare the histories of other nations to gain a comprehensive understanding of Manifest Destiny's influence and its enduring impact on national and international policies.

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ملخص

تشير الأيدلوجية "القدر المتجلي" إلى الدور الرئيسي الذي لعبته في التوسع الغربي للولايات المتحدة في القرن التاسع عشر، بناءً على الاعتقاد بأن الأمريكيين كان لديهم مهمة إلهية لنشر قيمهم عبر القارة. تستكشف هذه الدراسة ما إذا كان لدى الولايات المتحدة الحق في المطالبة بالأراضي الغربية وما الذي حفز هذا التوسع، مشككة فيما إذا كانت مهمة إلهية حقيقية أم أنها كانت مشوّمة بأهداف اقتصادية وسياسية، بما في ذلك الرغبة في توسيع الرقي. باستخدام نهج وصفي مع تحليل محدد، تفحص الدراسة أحداثاً رئيسية مثل معاهدة غوادالوبي هيدالغو وضم تكساس وألاسكا والفلبين وهاواي. تشير النتائج إلى أن "القدر المتجلي" كان مدفوعاً بمزيج من الدوافع الاقتصادية والسياسية والدينية. لقد برر الأمريكيون توسعهم من خلال معتقداتهم في التفوق العنصري والمهمة الإلهية، التي أثرت بشكل كبير على السياسات الوطنية وأوجدت شعوراً قوياً بالاستثنائية الأمريكية. كانت أحداث مثل نزوح السكان الأصليين وحرب المكسيك الأمريكية نتائج رئيسية لهذه الأيدلوجية. لا يزال إرث "القدر المتجلي" يؤثر على السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية حتى اليوم، مما يبرز تأثيره الدائم على هوية الأمة وأفعالها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التوسع الغربي، مهمة إلهية، اقتصادية وسياسية، معاهدة غوادالوبي هيدالغو، التفوق العنصري، السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية.