Manifest Destiny and the Growing Nation

Overview and Objectives

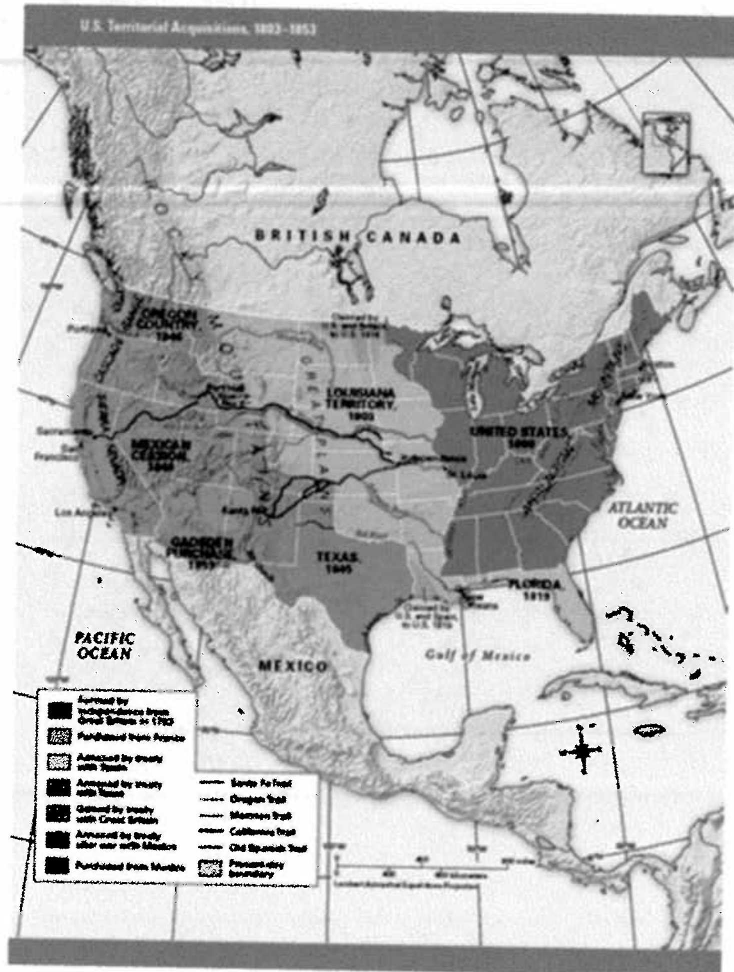
Overview
In a Response Group activity, students re-create each territorial acquisition of the 1800s and then evaluate whether the nation's actions were justifiable.

Objectives
In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

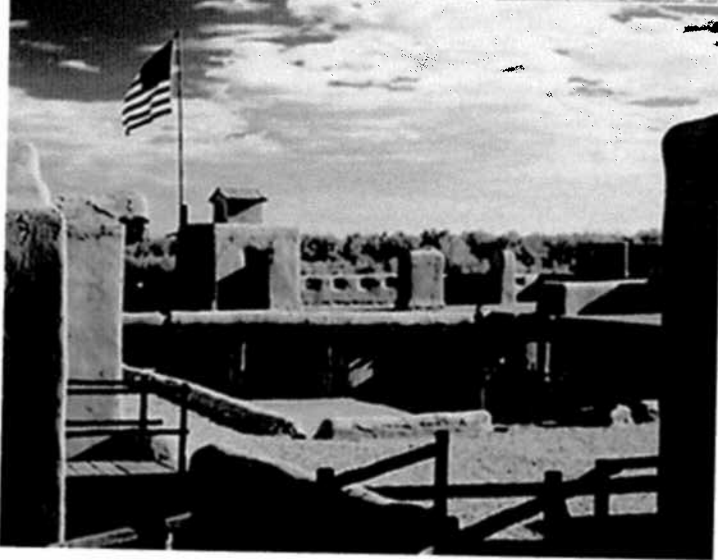
Social Studies
- describe the changing boundaries of the United States throughout the 1800s.
- analyze the causes, events, and effects of the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American War.
- determine the effects of manifest destiny on westward expansion in the 1800s.
- evaluate the incentives for territorial expansion and the methods used to acquire these lands in the 1800s.

Language Arts
- deliver details, reasons, and examples to support their positions.
- anticipate and answer listener concerns.

Social Studies Vocabulary
Key Content Terms territory, diplomacy, Texas War for Independence, annex, manifest destiny, Mexican-American War
Academic Vocabulary divine, justifiable, dictator


U.S. Territorial Acquisitions, 1803–1853
BRITISH CANADA
OREGON COUNTRY
1846
LOUISIANA TERRITORY
1803
UNITED STATES
MEXICAN CESSION
1848
GADSDEN PURCHASE
1853
TEXAS
1845
FLORIDA
1819
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
MEXICO
Gulf of Mexico
Santa Fe Trail
Oregon Trail
Mormon Trail
California Trail
Old Spanish Trail

Mexican Cession and Gadsden Purchase
Wyoming
Nevada
Utah
Colorado
UNITED STATES
California
Arizona
New Mexico
Texas
Red River
PACIFIC OCEAN
Gulf of Mexico
Monterrey
MEXICO
Mexico City
Veracruz
Ceded by Texas to U.S., 1845
Ceded by Mexico to U.S., 1848
Gadsden Purchase, 1853



Manifest Destiny and the Growing Nation

How justifiable was U.S. expansion in the 1800s?

In this unit, you will learn about the growth of the United States from about 1800 to the early 1850s. In 1800, the United States was bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Mississippi River to the west. Farther west lay regions claimed by Great Britain, Russia, France, and Spain. By the 1850s, the United States had acquired these lands, more than doubling its size, and extended its western border to the Pacific Ocean. The map on opposite page shows the steps by which the nation's growth took place.

Picture yourself moving west along a trail pioneers used—the Oregon Trail or the Santa Fe Trail. The first half of your journey will cross a vast, treeless plain. On a good day, your wagon train might travel 20 miles. Rivers slow you down, though, as crossing them is dangerous.

Several weeks on the trail will bring you to an even greater obstacle—the ranges of the rugged Rocky Mountains. Here your progress will slow from 20 miles per day to 20 or so miles per week. Timing is everything on this part of your journey. The high mountain passes are open for only a short time each year. If you reach the mountains too late in the year, you may end up trapped by snow—which will likely mean your death.

Despite such challenges, thousands of settlers made this journey in the 1840s and 1850s. The map on the opposite page shows the nation's pattern of settlement in 1860. As the map below shows, the plains and mountains the pioneers crossed remained largely unpopulated by U.S. citizens, although American Indians had lived on those lands for thousands of years. Before long, however, that situation would change.

Section 1 - Introduction

More than 150 years ago, the phrase manifest destiny inspired great hopes and dreams among many Americans. It led to a war with Mexico. And it changed the map of the United States.

Manifest destiny means "obvious fate." John O'Sullivan, a New York newspaper editor, first used the phrase in 1845. O'Sullivan wrote that it was the United States' "manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent." Looking at the land beyond the Rocky Mountains, he argued that Americans had a divine right to settle this area and make it their own.

The fact that Great Britain claimed part of this land—a huge area known as Oregon—made no difference to O'Sullivan. After all, the United States had stood up to Great Britain in the War of 1812.

Nor was O'Sullivan impressed by Mexico's claims to much of the West. Like many Americans of the time, he believed that the United States had a duty to extend the blessings of democracy to new lands and peoples. It was God's plan, he wrote, for Americans to expand their "great experiment of liberty."

When Americans began their "great experiment" in 1776, the idea that the United States might one day spread across the continent seemed like a dream. By 1848, however, the dream was a reality. In this chapter, you will learn how the United States tripled its size in a little more than a single lifetime.

Manifest destiny took many forms. The United States expanded through treaties, settlement, and war. As you read, think about how each new area was acquired and whether the decisions that led to U.S. expansion across North America were justifiable.

Section 2 - The Louisiana Territory

~~American diplomats (standing) work out the final details of the Louisiana Purchase with Talleyrand.~~

The nation's first opportunity for expansion during the early 1800s involved the vast territory to the west of the Mississippi River, then known as Louisiana. The United States wanted possession of the port city of New Orleans, near the mouth of the Mississippi River. By 1800, thousands of farmers were settling land to the west of the Appalachian Mountains. To get their crops to market, they floated them down the Mississippi to New Orleans. There the crops were shipped to Europe or to cities on the East Coast.

The farmers depended on being able to move their crops freely along the Mississippi. "The Mississippi," wrote James Madison, "is to them everything. It is the Hudson, the Delaware, the Potomac, and all the navigable rivers of the Atlantic States formed into one stream."

Louisiana Across the Mississippi River lay the unexplored territory of Louisiana. This immense region stretched from Canada in the north to Texas in the south. From the Mississippi, it reached west all the way to the Rocky Mountains. First claimed by France, it was given to Spain after the French and Indian War. In 1800, the French ruler. Napoleon Bonaparte convinced Spain to return Louisiana to France.

Napoleon had plans for Louisiana. He hoped to settle the territory with thousands of French farmers. These farmers would raise food for the slaves who worked on France's sugar plantations in the Caribbean.

Napoleon's plans alarmed frontier farmers. New Orleans was part of Louisiana. If Napoleon closed the port to American goods, farmers would have no way to get their crops to market.

"A Noble Bargain" President Thomas Jefferson understood the concerns of American farmers. In 1803, he sent James Monroe to France with an offer to buy New Orleans for $7.5 million. By the time Monroe reached France, Napoleon had changed his plans. A few years earlier, a slave named Toussaint L'Ouverture [too-SAN loo-ver-TEER] had led a slave revolt in the French Caribbean colony known today as Haiti. The former slaves defeated the French troops who tried to take back the colony. As a result, Napoleon no longer needed Louisiana.

In addition, France and Great Britain were on the brink of war. Napoleon knew that he might lose Louisiana to the British. Rather than lose Louisiana, it made sense to sell it to the United States.

Napoleon's offer to sell all of Louisiana stunned James Monroe. Instead of a city, suddenly the United States had the opportunity to buy an area as big as itself.

It didn't take long for Monroe to agree. On April 30, 1803, he signed a treaty giving Louisiana to the United States in exchange for $15 million. Said the French foreign minister, "You have made a noble bargain for yourselves, and I suppose you will make the most of it."

The Purchase Debate To most Americans, the Louisiana Purchase looked like the greatest land deal in history. The new territory would double the country's size at a bargain price of just 2 to 3 cents an acre.

Still, not everyone approved. Some people worried that such a large country would be impossible to govern. Politicians in the East fretted that they would lose power. Sooner or later, they warned, Louisiana would be carved into enough new states to outvote the eastern states in Congress.

Others objected to the $15 million price tag. "We are to give money of which we have too little," wrote a Boston critic, "for land of which we already have too much."

Opponents also accused Jefferson of "tearing the Constitution to tatters." They said that the Constitution made no provision for purchasing foreign territory.

Jefferson was troubled by the argument that the Louisiana Purchase was unconstitutional. Still, he believed it was better to stretch the limits of the Constitution than to lose a historic opportunity.

Late in 1803, the Senate voted to ratify the Louisiana Purchase treaty. Frontier farmers welcomed the news. "You have secured to us the free navigation of the Mississippi," a grateful westerner wrote Jefferson. "You have procured an immense and fertile country: and all these great blessings are obtained without war and bloodshed."

Section 3 - Florida

Escaped slaves were accepted into Seminole Indian communities.

Having acquired Louisiana through diplomacy, President Jefferson turned next to Florida. Spain had colonized Florida in the late 1500s. By the 1800s, Florida had a diverse population of Seminole Indians, Spanish colonists, English traders, and runaway slaves. In 1804, Jefferson sent two diplomats to Spain to buy Florida. Spain's answer was "no deal."

Many white Americans in the Southeast wanted the United States to take over Florida. Slave owners in Georgia were angry because slaves sometimes ran away to Florida. (Seminole Indians welcomed some of the escaped slaves.) In addition, white landowners in Georgia were upset by Seminole raids on their lands

Over the next few years, Spain's control of Florida weakened. The Spanish government could do nothing to stop the raids on farms in Georgia by Seminoles and ex-slaves.

Andrew Jackson Invades Florida In 1818, President James Monroe sent Andrew Jackson—the hero of the Battle of New Orleans—to Georgia with orders to end the raids. Jackson was told that he could chase raiding Seminoles into Florida. But he did not have the authority to invade the Spanish colony.

Despite his orders, Jackson marched into Florida with a force of 1,700 troops. Over the next few weeks, he captured Spanish military posts and arrested, tried, and executed two British subjects for stirring up Indian attacks. He also replaced the Spanish governor with an American. Spain demanded that Jackson be called back to Washington and punished for his illegal invasion.

"Govern or Get Out" Fearing war, President Monroe asked his cabinet for advice. All but one of his cabinet members advised him to remove Jackson and apologize to Spain. The exception was Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Rather than apologize, Adams convinced Monroe to send a blunt message to Spain. The message was this: govern Florida properly or get out.

Equally fearful of war, Spain decided to get out. In 1819, the Spanish government agreed to yield Florida to the United States. In exchange, the United States agreed to pay off $5 million in settlers' claims against Spain. The United States also agreed to honor Spain's longtime claim to Texas.

Not all Americans were happy about leaving Spain in charge of Texas. One newspaper declared Texas was "worth ten Floridas." Even so, the Senate ratified the Florida treaty two days after it was signed.

Section 4 - Texas

There was a reason many Americans felt that Texas was so valuable. Much of this region was well suited for growing cotton, the South's most valuable cash crop. Many southerners hoped that one day Texas would become part of the United States.

Americans Come to Texas The story of Texas begins with Moses Austin, a banker and business owner who dreamed of starting a U.S. colony in Spanish Texas. In 1821, Spanish officials granted Austin a huge piece of land. After Moses Austin died that same year, his son Stephen took over his father's dream.

Stephen F. Austin arrived in Texas just as Mexico declared its independence from Spain. Now Texas was a part of Mexico. Mexican officials agreed to let Austin start his colony—under certain conditions. Austin had to choose only moral and hardworking settlers. The settlers had to promise to become Mexican citizens and to join the Catholic church.

Austin agreed to Mexico's terms. By 1827, he had attracted 297 families—soon known as the "Old Three Hundred"— to Texas.

Rising Tensions The success of Austin's colony started a rush of settlers to Texas. By 1830, there were about 25,000 Americans in Texas, compared to 4,000 Tejanos (tay-HA-nos), or Texans of Mexican descent. Soon tensions between the two groups began to rise.

The Americans had several complaints. They were used to governing themselves, and they resented taking orders from Mexican officials. They were unhappy that all official documents had to be in Spanish, a language most of them were unwilling to learn. In addition, many were slaveholders who were upset when Mexico outlawed slavery in 1829.

The Tejanos had their own complaints. They were unhappy that many American settlers had come to Texas without Mexico's permission. Worse, most of these new immigrants showed little respect for Mexican culture and had no intention of becoming citizens.

The Mexican government responded by closing Texas to further U.S. immigration. The government sent troops to Texas to enforce the immigration laws.

The Texans Rebel Americans in Texas resented these actions. A group led by a lawyer named William Travis began calling for revolution. Another group led by Stephen F. Austin asked the Mexican government to reopen Texas to immigration and to make it a separate Mexican state. That way, Texans could run their own affairs.

In 1833, Austin traveled to Mexico and presented the Texans' demands to the new head of the Mexican government, General Antonio López de Santa Anna. The general was a power-hungry dictator who once boasted, "If I were God, I would wish to be more." Rather than bargain with Austin, Santa Anna tossed him in jail for promoting rebellion.

Soon after Austin was released in 1835, Texans rose up in revolt. Determined to crush the rebels, Santa Anna marched north with some 6,000 troops.

The Alamo In late February 1836, a large part of Santa Anna's army reached San Antonio, Texas. About 180 Texan volunteers, including eight Tejanos, defended the town. The Texans had taken over an old mission known as the Alamo. Among them was Davy Crockett, the famous frontiersman and former congressman from Tennessee. Sharing command with William Travis was James Bowie, a wellknown Texas "freedom fighter."

The Alamo's defenders watched as General Santa Anna raised a black flag that meant "Expect no mercy." The general demanded that the Texans surrender. Travis answered with a cannon shot.

Slowly, Santa Anna's troops began surrounding the Alamo. The Texans were vastly outnumbered, but only one man fled.

Meanwhile, Travis sent messengers to other towns in Texas, pleading for reinforcements and vowing not to abandon the Alamo. "Victory or death!" he proclaimed. But reinforcements never came.

For 12 days, the Mexicans pounded the Alamo with cannonballs. Then, at the first light of dawn on March 6, Santa Anna gave the order to storm the fort. Desperately, the Texans tried to fight off the attackers with rifle fire.

For 90 minutes, the battle raged. Then it was all over. By day's end, every one of the Alamo's defenders was dead. By Santa Anna's order, those who had survived the battle were executed on the spot.

Santa Anna described the fight for the Alamo as "but a small affair." But his decision to kill every man at the Alamo filled Texans with rage.

Texas Wins Its Independence Sam Houston, the commander of the Texas revolutionary army, understood Texans' rage. But as Santa Anna pushed on, Houston's only hope was to retreat eastward. By luring Santa Anna deeper into Texas, he hoped to make it harder for the general to supply his army and keep it battle-ready.

Houston's strategy wasn't popular, but it worked brilliantly. In April, Santa Anna caught up with Houston near the San Jacinto (san ha-SIN-to) River. Expecting the Texans to attack at dawn, the general kept his troops awake all night. When no attack came, the weary Mexicans relaxed. Santa Anna went to his tent to take a nap.

Late that afternoon, Houston's troops staged a surprise attack. Yelling, "Remember the Alamo!" the Texans overran the Mexican camp. Santa Anna fled, but he was captured the next day. In exchange for his freedom, he ordered all his remaining troops out of Texas. The Texas War for Independence had been won, but Mexico did not fully accept the loss of its territory.

To Annex Texas or Not? Now independent, the Republic of Texas earned the nickname Lone Star Republic because of the single star on its flag. But most Texans were Americans who wanted Texas to become part of the United States.

Despite their wishes, Texas remained independent for ten years. People in the United States were divided over whether to annex Texas. Southerners were eager to add another slave state. Northerners who opposed slavery wanted to keep Texas out. Others feared that annexation would lead to war with Mexico.

The 1844 presidential campaign was influenced by the question of whether to expand U.S. territory. One of the candidates, Henry Clay, warned, "Annexation and war with Mexico are identical." His opponent, James K. Polk, however, was a strong believer in manifest destiny. He was eager to acquire Texas. After Polk was elected, Congress voted to annex Texas. In 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state.

Section 5 - Oregon Country

Far to the northwest of Texas lay Oregon Country. This enormous, tree-covered wilderness stretched from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. To the north, Oregon was bounded by Alaska, which belonged to Russia. To the south, it was bordered by Spanish California and New Mexico.

In 1819, Oregon was claimed by four nations: Russia, Spain, Great Britain, and the United States. Spain was the first to drop out of the scramble. As part of the treaty to purchase Florida, Spain gave up its claim to Oregon. A few years later, Russia also dropped out. By 1825, Russia agreed to limit its claim to

the territory that lay north of the 54°40′ parallel of latitude. Today that line marks the southern border of Alaska.

That left Great Britain and the United States. For the time being, the two nations agreed to a peaceful "joint occupation" of Oregon.

Discovering Oregon The United States' claim to Oregon was based on the Lewis and Clark expedition. Between 1804 and 1806, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark had led a small band of explorers to the Oregon coast.

Lewis thought that many more Americans would follow the path blazed by the expedition. "In the course of 10 or 12 Years," he predicted in 1806, "a tour across the Continent by this rout [route] will be undertaken with as little concern as a voyage across the Atlantic."

That was wishful thinking. The route that Lewis and Clark had followed was far too rugged for ordinary travelers. There had to be a better way.

In 1824, a young fur trapper named Jedediah Smith found that better way. Smith discovered a passage through the Rocky Mountains called South Pass. Unlike the high, steep passes used by Lewis and Clark, South Pass was low and flat enough for wagons to use in crossing the Rockies. Now the way was open for settlers to seek their fortunes in Oregon.

~~Settlers who braved the 2,000-mile trek from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon Country were rewarded~~

Oregon Fever The first American settlers to travel through South Pass to Oregon were missionaries. These missionaries made few converts among Oregon's Indians. But their glowing reports of Oregon's fertile soil and towering forests soon attracted more settlers.

These early settlers wrote letters home describing Oregon as a "pioneer's paradise." The weather was always sunny, they claimed. Disease was unknown. Trees grew as thick as hairs on a dog's back. And farms were free for the taking. One man even joked that "pigs are running about under the great acorn trees, round and fat, and already cooked, with knives and forks sticking in them so you can cut off a slice whenever you are hungry."

Reports like these inspired other settlers who were looking for a fresh start. In 1843, about 1,000 pioneers packed their belongings into covered wagons and headed for Oregon. A year later, nearly twice as many people made the long journey across the plains and mountains. "The Oregon Fever has broke out," reported one observer, "and is now raging."

All of Oregon or Half? Along with Texas, "Oregon fever" also played a role in the 1844 presidential campaign. Polk won the election with such stirring slogans as "All of Oregon or none!" and "Fifty-four forty or fight!" Polk promised he would not rest until the United States had annexed all of Oregon Country.

But Polk didn't want Oregon enough to risk starting a war with Great Britain. Instead, he agreed to a compromise treaty that divided Oregon roughly in half at the 49th parallel. That line now marks the western border between the United States and Canada.

The Senate debate over the Oregon treaty was fierce. Senators from the South and the East strongly favored the treaty. They saw no reason to go to war over "worse than useless territory on the coast of the Pacific." Senators from the West opposed the treaty. They wanted to hold out for all of Oregon. On June 18, 1846, the Senate ratified the compromise treaty by a vote of 41 to 14.

Polk got neither "fifty-four forty" nor a fight. What he got was a diplomatic settlement that both the United States and Great Britain could accept without spilling a drop of blood.

Section 6 - The Mexican-American War

You might think that Texas and Oregon were quite enough new territory for any president. But not for Polk. This humorless, hardworking president had one great goal. He wanted to expand the United States as far as he could.

Polk's gaze fell next on the huge areas known as California and New Mexico. He was determined to have them both—by purchase if possible, by force if necessary.

These areas were first colonized by Spain but became Mexican territories when Mexico won its independence in 1821. Both were thinly settled, and the Mexican government had long neglected them. That was reason enough for Polk to hope they might be for sale. He sent a representative to Mexico to try to buy the territories. But Mexican officials refused even to see Polk's representative.

War Breaks Out in Texas When Congress voted to annex Texas, relations between the United States and Mexico turned sour. To Mexico, the annexation of Texas was an act of war. To make matters worse, Texas and Mexico could not agree on a border. Texas claimed the Rio Grande as its border on the south and the west. Mexico wanted the border to be the Nueces (new-AY-sis) River, about 150 miles northeast of the Rio Grande.

On April 25, 1846, Mexican soldiers fired on U.S. troops who were patrolling along the Rio Grande. Sixteen Americans were killed or wounded. This was just the excuse for war that Polk had been waiting for. Mexico, he charged, "has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil." Two days after Polk's speech, Congress declared war on Mexico. The Mexican-American War had begun.

The Fall of New Mexico and California A few months later, General Stephen Kearny led the Army of the West out of Kansas. His orders were to occupy New Mexico and then continue west to California.

Mexican opposition melted away in front of Kearny's army. The Americans took control of New Mexico without firing a shot. "Gen'l Kearny," a pleased Polk wrote in his diary, "has thus far performed his duty well."

Meanwhile, a group of Americans led by the explorer John C. Frémont launched a rebellion against Mexican rule in California. The Americans arrested and jailed General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (vuh-YAY-oh), the Mexican commander of northern California. Then they raised a crude flag showing a grizzly bear sketched in blackberry juice. California, they declared, was now the Bear Flag Republic.

When Kearny reached California, he joined forces with the rebels. Within weeks, all of California was under U.S. control.

The United States Invades Mexico The conquest of Mexico itself was far more difficult. U.S. troops under General Zachary Taylor battled their way south from Texas. Taylor was a no-nonsense general who was known fondly as "Old Rough and Ready" because of his backwoods clothes. After 6,000 U.S. troops took the Mexican city of Monterrey, an old enemy stopped them. General Santa Anna had marched north to meet Taylor with an army of 20,000 Mexican troops.

In this painting, the U.S. cavalry overwhelms the enemy in the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, Texas,...

In February 1847, the two forces met near a ranch called Buena Vista (BWEY-nuh VIS-tuh). After two days of hard fighting, Santa Anna reported that "both armies have been cut to pieces." Rather than lose his remaining forces, Santa Anna retreated south. The war in northern Mexico was over.

A month later, U.S. forces led by General Winfield Scott landed at Veracruz (ver-uh-CROOZ) in southern Mexico. Scott was a stickler for discipline and loved fancy uniforms. These traits earned him the nickname "Old Fuss and Feathers." For the next six months, his troops fought their way to Mexico City, Mexico's capital.

Outside the capital, the Americans met fierce resistance at the castle of Chapultepec (chuh-PUHL-tuh-PEK). About 1,000 Mexican soldiers and 100 young military cadets fought bravely to defend the fortress. Six of the cadets chose to die fighting rather than surrender. To this day, the boys who died that day are honored in Mexico as the Niños Héroes (NEEN-yos EHR-oh-ace), the boy heroes.

Despite such determined resistance, Scott's army captured Mexico City in September 1847. Watching from a distance, a Mexican officer muttered darkly, "God is a Yankee."

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo Early in 1848, Mexico and the United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (gwa-duh-LOO-pay hih-DAHLgo). Mexico agreed to give up Texas and a vast region known as the Mexican Cession. (A cession is something that is given up.) This area included the present day states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as parts of Colorado and Wyoming.

Under this agreement, Mexico gave up half of all its territory. In return, the United States agreed to pay Mexico $15 million. It also promised to protect the 80,000 to 100,000 Mexicans living in Texas and in the Mexican Cession. Most of these promises, however, were not kept.

In Washington, a few senators spoke up to oppose the treaty. Some of them argued that the United States had no right to any Mexican territory other than Texas. They believed that the Mexican-American

War had been unjust and that the treaty was even more so. New Mexico and California together, they said, were "not worth a dollar" and should be returned to Mexico.

Other senators opposed the treaty because they wanted even more land. They wanted the Mexican Cession to include a large part of northern Mexico as well. To most senators, however, the Mexican Cession was a manifest destiny dream come true. The Senate ratified the treaty by a vote of 38 to 14.

~~[illegible] vada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico to the [illegible]~~

The Gadsden Purchase A few years later, the United States acquired still more land from Mexico. In 1853, James Gadsden arranged the purchase of a strip of land just south of the Mexican Cession for $10 million. Railroad builders wanted this land because it was relatively flat and could serve as a good railroad route. The acquisition of this land, known as the Gadsden Purchase, created the present-day border of the southwestern United States with Mexico.

Most Americans were pleased with the new outlines of their country. Still, not everyone rejoiced in this expansion. Until the Mexican- American War, many people had believed that the United States was too good a nation to bully or invade its weaker neighbors. Now they knew that such behavior was the dark side of manifest destiny.

Summary

As the 1800s progressed, more and more settlers were lured to the West by hopes of free land

In this chapter, you read about how Americans extended their nation to the west and the south. The idea of manifest destiny fueled many of the events that led to expansion.

The Louisiana Purchase In 1803, the United States added the vast territory known as Louisiana. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the nation's land area.

Florida A treaty with Spain added Florida to the United States in 1819.

Texas In 1836, Americans in Texas rebelled against the Mexican government there and created the Lone Star Republic. In 1845, Congress admitted Texas into the union. The Lone Star Republic was formally dissolved in 1846.

Oregon Country A treaty with Great Britain added Oregon Country in 1846.

War with Mexico In 1846, the United States went to war with Mexico in the Mexican- American War. In an 1848 treaty with Mexico, the United States acquired the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as parts of Colorado and Wyoming. Five years later, the Gadsden Purchase completed the outline of the continental United States.

Life in the West

Overview and Objectives

Overview
In a Problem Solving Groupwork activity, students create and perform minidramas about eight groups of people who moved to the West in the 1800s.
Students explore these people's motives for moving, the hardships they faced, and the legacies they left behind for future generations.

Objectives
In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will
Social Studies
- analyze the motives, hardships, and economic incentives associated with westward expansion.
- describe the role of pioneer women and the new status that western women achieved.

Language Arts
- employ narrative and descriptive strategies in a dramatization.

Social Studies Vocabulary
Key Content Terms Lewis and Clark expedition, legacy, rancho, Oregon Trail, Mormons, forty-niners
Academic Vocabulary motive, stimulate, status, prospect, persecuted

Life in the West

What were the motives, hardships, and legacies of the groups that moved west in the 1800s?

Section 1 - Introduction

The vast region that stretches from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean is one of the most extraordinary landscapes on Earth. Tourists come from all over to see its mountains, canyons, deserts, and plains.

To American settlers east of the Mississippi River, this great expanse of grasslands, mountains, and deserts was the West. For all its beauty, the West was a challenging environment. Look at the names that settlers gave to its features. Where else in the United States can you find a mountain range called the Crazies, a scorching desert named Death Valley, a blood-red canyon called Flaming Gorge, or a raging river known as the River of No Return?

Despite its geographic challenges, the West was never empty. Perhaps as many as 3 million American Indians lived there before Europeans arrived. These first westerners were far more diverse in language and culture than the Europeans who claimed their land.

For most Americans in the early 1800s, however, the West was mostly a blank map. By 1850, it had become the land of opportunity. The West boasted wide-open spaces and great wealth in timber, gold, silver, and other natural resources. It became a magnet for immigrants and for easterners looking for a new start in life. As Americans began their westward trek, they created new markets for eastern merchants. In time, the West changed the nation's economy and politics. It also created folklore of "rugged individualism" that has become a lasting part of American culture.

~~Westward the Course of Empire Takes its Way, [illegible] 1861 by Emanuel Gottlieb [illegible]~~

Newspaperman Horace Greeley captured the growing enthusiasm for "going west" when he wrote, "If you have no family or friends to aid you, and no prospect [opportunity] opened to you . . . turn your face to the Great West, and there build up a home and fortune." In this chapter, you will learn about eight groups of people who turned their faces to the West in the first half of the 1800s. You will learn about their motives for heading West, the hardships they faced, and the legacies they left behind.

Section 2 - The Explorers

In the early 1800s, a number of expeditions set out from the United States to explore the West. The most famous was the Lewis and Clark expedition, which was ordered by President Thomas Jefferson.

The major motive behind the expedition was to make friendly contact with Indian groups that might be interested in trade. A second motive was to find the Northwest Passage, a water route across North America that explorers had been seeking ever since Columbus reached the Americas. With the purchase of Louisiana from France in 1803, the expedition gained a third motive—finding out just what the United States had bought.

Up the Missouri River In May 1804, the 45-member expedition left St. Louis, Missouri, in three boats. Jefferson's private secretary, Meriwether Lewis, and his friend William Clark led the expedition. Its members included soldiers, frontiersmen, and an African American slave named York, who worked for Clark.

It was hard going from the first day. Rowing upstream against the Missouri River's strong current left the explorers' hands blistered and their muscles sore. Mosquitoes feasted on their sunburned faces.

By summer, the explorers had reached Indian country. Most American Indians welcomed the strangers, and York fascinated the Indians. They had never seen a black man before. Again and again, wrote Clark in his journal, York allowed his skin to be rubbed with a wet finger to prove "that he was not a painted white man."

The explorers made camp for the winter near a Mandan village in what is now North Dakota. There, a French fur trapper joined them along with his 16-year-old wife, a Shoshone (shuh-SHOW-nee) woman named Sacagawea (sah-kuh-juh-WEE-uh), and their infant son. As a girl, Sacagawea had been kidnapped from her people by another Indian group. Lewis and Clark hoped she would translate for them when they reached Shoshone country.

To the Pacific and Back In the spring of 1805, the explorers set out once more. As they moved up the Missouri River, rapids and waterfalls slowed their progress. When they hauled their boats by land around these obstacles, the thorns of the prickly-pear cactus pierced their feet. Meanwhile, grizzly bears raided their camps. Game became scarce.

By late summer, the explorers could see the Rocky Mountains looming ahead. To cross the mountains before the first snows of winter closed the high passes, they would have to find horses—and soon.

Fortunately, the expedition had reached the land of Sacagawea's childhood. One day, a group of Indians approached. To Sacagawea's great joy, they proved to be Shoshone. Learning that her brother was now a Shoshone chief, Sacagawea persuaded him to provide the explorers with the horses they desperately needed.

The explorers made it over the Rockies, but they were more dead than alive. The Nez Perce (nehz pers), an Indian people living in the Pacific Northwest, saved them from starvation. A grateful Lewis wrote in his journal that the Nez Perce "are the most hospitable, honest, and sincere people that we have met with in our voyage."

As winter closed in, the explorers reached their final destination, the Pacific Ocean. Clark marked the event by carving on a tree, "William Clark December 3rd 1805 By Land from the U. States."

The Explorers' Legacy After a wet and hungry winter in Oregon, the explorers headed home. In September 1806, two years and four months after setting out, they returned to St. Louis. Lewis proudly

wrote to Jefferson, "In obedience to our orders, we have penetrated the Continent of North America to the Pacific Ocean."

Lewis and Clark had good reason to be proud. They had not found the Northwest Passage, for it did not exist. But they had traveled some 8,000 miles. They had mapped a route to the Pacific. They had established good relations with western Indians. Most of all, they had brought back priceless information about the West and its peoples.

Other explorers added to this legacy and helped prepare the way for the settlement of the West. In 1806, the same year Lewis and Clark returned to St. Louis, 26-year-old army lieutenant Zebulon Pike set out to explore the southern part of the new Louisiana Territory. Pike and his party traveled up the valley of the Arkansas River into present-day Colorado. There, Pike saw the mountain that today is called Pikes Peak.

Pike went on to explore Spanish territory along the Rio Grande and the Red River. His reports of the wealth of Spanish towns brought many American traders to the Southwest. But Pike was not impressed with the landscape. He called the West the "Great American Desert."

Another famed explorer, John C. Frémont, helped to correct this image. Nicknamed "the Pathfinder," Frémont mapped much of the territory between the Mississippi Valley and the Pacific Ocean in the 1840s. His glowing descriptions of a "land of plenty" inspired many families to try their luck in the West.

Section 3 - The Californios

If Lewis and Clark had turned south from Oregon after reaching the Pacific, they would have found Spain's best-kept secret: a sun-drenched land called California.

The California Missions In 1769, a Spanish missionary named Junipero Serra (who-NEE-peh-ro SEHR-ra) led soldiers and priests north from Mexico to California. Serra's goal was to convert the California Indians to Christianity. To do this, he established a chain of missions that eventually stretched from San Diego to just north of San Francisco. Each mission controlled a huge area of land, as well as the Indians who worked it.

Although the missionaries meant well, the missions were deadly to native Californians. Indians were sometimes treated harshly, and thousands died of diseases brought to California by the newcomers.

Settlers followed the missionaries to California. "We were the pioneers of the Pacific coast," wrote Guadalupe Vallejo, "building pueblos [towns] and missions while George Washington was carrying on the war of the Revolution." To reward soldiers and attract settlers, the Spanish began the practice of making large grants of land.

When Mexico won its independence in 1821, California came under Mexican rule. In 1833, the Mexican government closed the missions. Half of the mission land was supposed to go to Indians. Mexico, however, established its own system of land grants in the Southwest and gave most of California's

mission lands to soldiers and settlers. The typical Spanish-speaking Californian, or Californio, was granted a rancho of 50,000 acres or more.

Life on the Ranchos Life on the ranchos combined hard work and the occasional fiesta, or social gathering. Most families lived in simple adobe houses with dirt floors. The Californios produced almost everything they needed at home. Indian servants did much of the work.

The ranchos were so huge that neighbors lived at least a day's journey apart. As a result, strangers were always welcome for the news they brought of the outside world. During weddings and fiestas, Californios celebrated with singing, dancing, and brilliant displays of horsemanship.

In the 1830s, cattle ranching became California's most important industry. Cattle provided hides and tallow (beef fat) that could be traded for imported goods brought by ship. Among the goods that an American sailor named Richard Henry Dana carried to California in his trading ship were teas, coffee, sugars, spices, raisins, molasses, hardware, dishes, tinware, cutlery, clothing, jewelry, and furniture.

Because California was so far from the capital in Mexico City, the Mexican government neglected the territory. Soldiers were not paid, and they took what they needed to survive from the people they were supposed to protect. Officials sent to govern California were often unskilled and sometimes dishonest.

The Californios' Legacy In 1846, the United States captured California as part of the war with Mexico. Before long, Californios were a minority in California.

Still, the Californios left a lasting mark. California is full of Spanish place names such as San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. The Californios also introduced many of California's famous crops, such as grapes, olives, and citrus fruits. Most of all, they opened California to the world—and the world soon rushed in.

Section 4 - The Mountain Men

The Lewis and Clark expedition stimulated new interest in an old industry: the fur trade. Inspired by the explorers' reports of finding beaver in the Rockies, a Spanish trader named Manuel Lisa followed their route west. In 1807, Lisa led 42 trappers up the Missouri River. The next year, he took 350 trappers into the Rockies. For the next 30 years, trappers crisscrossed the West in search of valuable furs.

The Trapper's Life The trappers, who were also called mountain men, lived hard and usually died young. During the spring and fall, they set their traps in icy streams. In July, they traveled to trading posts to swap furs for supplies or gathered for an annual rendezvous, or get together.

Mountain men, like the one pictured here, were rugged individualists.

The rendezvous may have been fun, but the trappers' lives were filled with hazards. Fur thieves, Indians, wolves, and bears attacked them. Mountain man Hugh Glass was mauled by a mother bear that threw chunks of his flesh to her hungry cubs before friends rescued him.

Accidents were common, too. A single misplaced step on a mountain, or a misjudged river rapid, often meant sudden death. Disease also took a heavy toll. When one man asked for news about a party of trappers, he learned that "some had died by lingering diseases, and others by the fatal [rifle] ball or arrow." Out of 116 men, he wrote, "there were not more than sixteen alive."

Freedom and Adventure Trappers braved this dangerous way of life because of the freedom and adventure it offered. A good example is Jim Beckwourth, an African American from Virginia who became a fur trapper and explorer. While hunting beaver in the Rockies, Beckwourth was captured by Crow Indians. According to Beckwourth, an old woman identified him as her long-lost son, and he was adopted into the tribe. "What could I do?" he wrote later. "Even if I should deny my Crow origin, they would not believe me."

Beckwourth lived with the Crow for six years and became a chief. By the time he left the tribe in the 1830s, the fur trade was in decline. Like other mountain men, however, Beckwourth continued his adventurous life as an explorer, army scout, and trader. In 1850, he discovered the lowest pass across the Sierra Nevada range, known today as Beckwourth Pass.

The Mountain Men's Legacy In their search for furs, the mountain men explored most of the West. The routes they pioneered across mountains and deserts became the Oregon and California Trails. Their trading posts turned into supply stations for settlers moving west along those trails.

A surprising number of mountain men left another kind of legacy: personal journals. Their stories still have the power to make us laugh and cry—and to wonder how they lived long enough to tell their tales.

Section 5 - The Missionaries

Ever since Lewis and Clark appeared among them, the Nez Perce had been friendly toward Americans. In 1831, three Nez Perce traveled to St. Louis to learn more about the white man's ways. There, the Nez Perce asked if someone would come west to teach their people the secrets of the "Black Book," or Bible.

Several missionaries answered that call. The best known were Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and Henry and Eliza Spalding. In 1836, the two couples traveled west from St. Louis along the Oregon Trail.

It was a difficult journey. Narcissa described the Rockies as "the most terrible mountains for steepness." Still, the missionaries arrived safely in Oregon, proving that women could endure the journey west.

A Difficult Start On reaching Oregon, the group split up. The Spaldings went to work with the Nez Perce. The Whitmans worked among a neighboring group, the Cayuse. Neither couple knew very much about the people they hoped to convert. The result was a difficult start.

After three years, the Spaldings finally made their first converts. In 1839, Henry baptized two Nez Perce chiefs. A year later, one of the chiefs had his infant son baptized as well. The child would grow up to be the leader best known as Chief Joseph.

The Whitmans were less successful. The Cayuse were far more interested in the whites' weapons and tools than in their religion. The couple also offended the Cayuse. They refused to pay for the land they took for their mission or to offer visitors gifts, as was the Indians' custom. Not a single Cayuse converted to the new faith.

In 1836, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman married and set out for Oregon to establish a mission. ~~Here, ...~~

A Pioneer's Paradise Marcus Whitman was far more successful at converting Americans over to the belief that Oregon was a pioneer's paradise. "It does not concern me so much what is to become of any particular set of Indians," he wrote. "Our greatest work is . . . to aid the white settlement of this country and help to found its religious institutions."

In 1842, Marcus traveled east on horseback. Along the way, he urged Americans to settle in Oregon. On his return, he guided a large group of settlers along the Oregon Trail. More settlers soon followed. "The poor Indians are amazed at the overwhelming number of Americans coming into the country," observed Narcissa. "They seem not to know what to make of it."

In 1847, measles came west with settlers and swept through the Whitman mission. Marcus treated the sick as best he could. The Cayuse noticed that whites usually recovered, while their own people were dying. Rumors spread that Whitman was giving deadly pills to Indians. Cayuse Indians attacked the mission, killing both Marcus and Narcissa.

The Missionaries' Legacy Like the Spanish priests in California, American preachers in Oregon hoped their legacy would be large numbers of Christian Indians. In fact, relatively few Indians became Christians. Many, however, died of the diseases that came west with the missionaries.

The missionaries' true legacy was to open the West to settlement. In California, Oregon, and other territories, settlers followed in the footsteps of the missionaries.

Section 6 - The Pioneer Women

Women pioneers shared in the danger and the work of settling the West. Most of these women were wives and mothers, but some were single women with motives of seeking homesteads, husbands, or other new opportunities. Pioneer women not only helped to shape the future of the West, but also earned new status for themselves and for women throughout the United States.

~~Although pioneer women had to travel 15 to 20 miles a day, they were still expected to take care o...~~

On the Trail Between 1840 and 1869, about 350,000 people traveled west in covered wagons. Most westward-bound pioneers gathered each spring near Independence, Missouri. There they formed columns of wagons called wagon trains.

The journey west lasted four to six months and covered about 2,000 miles. Wagon space was so limited that pioneers were forced to leave most of the comforts of home behind. When the way became steep,

they often had to toss out the few treasures they managed to bring. The Oregon Trail was littered with furniture, china, books, and other cherished objects.

Women were expected to do the work they had done back home, but while traveling 15 to 20 miles a day. They cooked, washed clothes, and took care of the children. Meals on wheels were simple. "About the only change we have from bread and bacon," wrote Helen Carpenter, "is to bacon and bread."

The daily drudgery wore many women down. Lavinia Porter recalled, "I would make a brave effort to be cheerful and patient until the camp work was done. Then starting out ahead of the team and my men folks, when I thought I had gone beyond hearing distance, I would throw myself down on the unfriendly desert and give way like a child to sobs and tears."

Trail Hazards The death toll on the trail was high. Disease was the worst killer. Accidents were also common. People drowned crossing rivers. Indian attacks were rare, but the prospect of them added to the sense of danger.

By the end of the journey, each woman had a story to tell. Some had seen buffalo stampedes and prairie fires on the Great Plains. Some had almost frozen to death in the mountains or died of thirst in the deserts. But most survived to build new lives in the West.

One group of pioneer women—African Americans who had escaped from slave states or who were brought west by their owners—faced a unique danger. Even though slavery was outlawed in most of the West, bounty hunters were often able to track down fugitive slaves. But for some African American women, the move west brought freedom. For example, when Biddy Mason's owner tried to take her from California (a free state) to Texas, Mason sued for her freedom and won. She moved to Los Angeles, where she became a well-known pioneer and community leader.

The Pioneer Women's Legacy The journey west changed pioneer women. The hardships of the trail brought out strengths and abilities they did not know they possessed. "I felt a secret joy," declared one Oregon pioneer, "in being able to have the power that sets things going."

Women did set things going. Wherever they settled, schools, churches, libraries, literary societies, and charitable groups soon blossomed. Annie Bidwell, for example, left behind a remarkable legacy. When Annie married John Bidwell, she moved to his ranch in what is now the town of Chico, California. There she taught sewing to local Indian women and helped their children learn to read and write English. Annie convinced John to give up drinking—he closed the tavern that had been part of his home—and encouraged the building of Chico's first church.

Annie was active in other causes as well, including the movement to give women a right that had long been denied them in the East: the right to vote. Wyoming Territory led the way by granting women the right to vote in 1869. By 1900, a full 20 years before women across the nation would win the right to vote, women were voting in four western states. The freedom and sense of equality enjoyed by women in the West helped pave the way for more equal treatment of women throughout the United States. This was perhaps the greatest legacy of the women pioneers.

Section 7 - The Mormons

In 1846, a wagon train of pioneers headed west in search of a new home. Looking down on the shining surface of Great Salt Lake in what is now Utah, their leader, Brigham Young, declared, "This is the place!"

It was not a promising spot. One pioneer described the valley as a "broad and barren plain . . . blistering in the rays of the midsummer sun." A woman wrote, "Weak and weary as I am, I would rather go a thousand miles further than remain." But that was one of the valley's attractions. No one else wanted the place that Brigham Young claimed for his followers, the Mormons.

A Persecuted Group The Mormons were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Joseph Smith had founded this church in New York in 1830. Smith taught that he had received a sacred book, The Book of Mormon, from an angel. He believed it was his task to create a community of believers who would serve God faithfully.

Smith's followers lived in close communities, working hard and sharing their goods. Yet, wherever they settled—first New York, then Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois—their neighbors persecuted them.

Many people were offended by the Mormons' teachings, especially their acceptance of polygamy—the practice of having more than one wife. Others resented the Mormons' rapidly growing power and wealth. In 1844, resentment turned to violence when a mob in Illinois killed Joseph Smith.

After Smith's death, Brigham Young took over as leader of the Mormons. Young decided to move his community to Utah. There, the Mormons might be left alone to follow their faith in peace.

West to Utah Young turned out to be a practical as well as a religious leader. "Prayer is good," he said, "but when baked potatoes and pudding and milk are needed, prayer will not supply their place."

Young carefully planned every detail of the trek to Utah. The pioneers he led west stopped along the way to build shelters and plant crops for those who would follow.

Even with all this planning, the journey was difficult. "We soon thought it unusual," wrote one Mormon, "to leave a campground without burying one or more persons."

When he arrived at Great Salt Lake, Young laid out his first settlement, Salt Lake City. By the time he died in 1877, Utah had 125,000 Mormons living in 500 settlements.

To survive in this dry country, Mormons had to learn new ways to farm. They built dams, canals, and irrigation ditches to carry precious water from mountain streams to their farms in the valley. With this water, they made the desert bloom.

The Mormons' Legacy The Mormons were the first Americans to settle the Great Basin. They pioneered the farming methods adopted by later settlers of this dry region. They also helped settlers make their way west. Salt Lake City quickly became an important stop for travelers in need of food and supplies.

To the Mormons, however, their greatest legacy was the faith they planted so firmly in the Utah desert. From its center in Salt Lake City, the Mormon church has grown into a worldwide religion with more than 11 million members.

Section 8 - The Forty-Niners

In 1848, a carpenter named James Marshall was building a sawmill on the American River in northern California. Suddenly, he spotted something shining in the water. "I reached my hand down and picked it up," he wrote later. "It made my heart thump, for I felt certain it was gold."

When word of Marshall's discovery leaked out, people across California dropped everything to race to the goldfields. "All were off to the mines," wrote a minister, "some on horses, some on carts, and some on crutches."

The World Rushes In By 1849, tens of thousands of gold seekers from around the world had joined the California gold rush. About two-thirds of these forty-niners were Americans. The motive of fortune also brought settlers from Mexico, South America, Europe, Australia, and even China.

The forty-niners' first challenge was simply getting to California. From China and Australia, they had to brave the rough crossing of the Pacific Ocean. From the East, many traveled by ship to Panama in Central America, crossed through dangerous jungles to the Pacific side, and boarded ships north to San Francisco. Others made the difficult journey overland.

Most forty-niners were young, and almost all were men. When Luzena Wilson arrived in Sacramento with her family, a miner offered her $5 for her biscuits just to have "bread made by a woman." When she hesitated, he doubled his offer. "Women were scarce in those days," she wrote. "I lived six months in Sacramento and saw only two."

Miners shoveled gravel into a narrow box called a sluice. [illegible]

Life in the Mining Camps Wherever gold was spotted, mining camps with names like Mad Mule Gulch and You Bet popped up overnight. At Coyote Diggings, Luzena found "a row of canvas tents." A few months later, "there were two thousand men . . . and the streets were lined with drinking saloons and gambling tables." Merchants made fortunes selling eggs for $6 a dozen and flour for $400 a barrel.

With no police to keep order, the camps were rough places. Miners frequently fought over the boundaries of their claims, and they took it on themselves to punish crimes. "In the short space of twenty-four hours," wrote Louise Clappe, "we have had murders, fearful accidents, bloody deaths, a mob, whippings, a hanging, an attempt at suicide, and a fatal duel."

Digging for gold was hard and tedious work. The miners spent long days digging up mud, dirt, and stones while standing knee-deep in icy streams. All too soon, the easy-to-find gold was gone. "The day for quick fortune-making is over," wrote a miner in 1851. "There are thousands of men now in California who would gladly go home if they had the money."

The Forty-Niners' Legacy By 1852, the gold rush was over. While it lasted, about 250,000 people flooded into California. For California's Indians, the legacy of this invasion was dreadful. Between 1848 and 1870, warfare and disease reduced their number from about 150,000 to just 30,000. In addition, many Californios lost their land to the newcomers.

The forty-niners also left a prosperous legacy. By 1850, California had enough people to become the first state in the far west. These new Californians helped to transform the Golden State into a diverse land of economic opportunity.

Section 9 - The Chinese

Gam Saan, or "Gold Mountain," was what people in China called California in 1848. To poor and hungry Chinese peasants, Gam Saan sounded like a paradise. There, they were told, "You will have great pay, large houses, and food and clothing of the finest description . . . Money is in great plenty."

By 1852, more than 20,000 Chinese had ventured across the Pacific to California. That year, one of every ten Californians was Chinese.

An Uncertain Welcome At first, the Chinese were welcomed. Lai Chun-Chuen, an early immigrant, observed that they "were received like guests" and "greeted with favor." In 1852, the governor of California praised Chinese immigrants as "one of the most worthy classes of our newly adopted citizens."

As gold mining became more difficult, however, attitudes toward immigrants began to change. A miner from Chile complained, "The Yankee regarded every man but . . . an American as an interloper [intruder] who had no right to come to California and pick up the gold." The Chinese, too, came under attack.

American miners called on the government to drive foreigners out of the goldfields. In 1852, the state legislature passed a law requiring foreign miners to pay a monthly fee for a license to mine. As the tax collectors arrived in the camps, most of the foreigners left. One traveler saw them "scattered along the roads in every direction," like refugees fleeing an invading army.

Thousands of Chinese left their homeland and flocked to the California goldfields. [illegible]

The Chinese Stay The Chinese, however, paid the tax and stayed on. When the miners' tax failed to drive off the Chinese, Americans tried to force them into leaving. Whites hacked off the long queues (kyus), or braids, worn by Chinese men. They burned the shacks of Chinese miners. Beatings followed burnings.

Discouraged Chinese immigrants left the mines to open restaurants, laundries, and stores in California's growing cities. "The best eating houses in San Francisco," one miner wrote, were those opened by the Chinese. So many Chinese settled in San Francisco that local newspapers called their neighborhood Chinatown. Today, San Francisco's Chinatown remains the oldest and largest Chinese community in the United States.

Other Chinese put their farming skills to work in California's fertile Central Valley. They drained swamps and dug irrigation ditches to water arid fields. In time, they would help transform California into America's fruit basket and salad bowl.

The Legacy of the Chinese Immigrants Most of the Chinese who came to California in search of gold hoped to return to China as rich men. A few did just that. Most, however, stayed on in the United States. Despite continued prejudice against them, their hard work, energy, and skills greatly benefited California and other western states. "In mining, farming, in factories and in the labor generally of California," observed a writer in 1876, "the employment of the Chinese has been found most desirable."

The Chinese not only helped to build the West, but they also made it a more interesting place to live. Wherever they settled, Chinese immigrants brought with them the arts, tastes, scents, and sounds of one of the world's oldest and richest cultures.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned about the people who settled the West in the 1800s.

The Explorers Explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark went west to find the Northwest Passage and to establish friendly relations with native people. The expedition helped prepare the way for future settlement.

The Californios In California, Spanish-speaking settlers followed in the footsteps of missionaries. The Californios' way of life centered on the rancho and the raising of cattle.

The Mountain Men Valuable beaver furs—and a life of freedom and adventure—attracted fur trappers to the West. Many of these hardy mountain men stayed on as scouts, guides, and traders.

The Missionaries People traveled to Oregon and other western territories in hopes of converting Indians to Christianity. Although they made few converts, the missionaries attracted other settlers to the West.

The Pioneer Women Many women pioneers sought new opportunities in the West. Besides working to establish homes and farms, women often brought education and culture to new settlements.

The Mormons Mormon pioneers traveled to Utah in search of religious freedom. They built cities and towns and introduced new methods of farming to the dry plains.

The Forty-Niners Gold seekers from all over the world rushed to California in 1849. Few became rich, but many stayed to help build the new state's economy.

The Chinese The gold rush attracted thousands of Chinese immigrants to California. Although they often had to fight prejudice, most of them remained in the United States, working as laborers and starting new businesses and farms.

Mexicano Contributions to the Southwest

Overview and Objectives

Overview
In a Social Studies Skill Builder, students examine important Mexicano contributions and determine how they have influenced life in the United States.

Objectives
In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will
Social Studies
• identify the effects of the Mexican-American War on Mexicanos.
• analyze the influence of Mexicano contributions on the culture and economy of the Southwest in the 1800s and the United States today.
• demonstrate an understanding of Mexicano contributions in their communities.
Language Arts
• use word meanings within an appropriate context.

Social Studies Vocabulary
Key Content Terms Mexicanos, irrigation
Academic Vocabulary tradition, accompaniment, procession

Mexicano Contributions to the Southwest

How have Mexicano contributions influenced life in the United States?

Section 1 - Introduction

The Texas War for Independence and the Mexican- American War in the 1840s had a lasting effect on the people of the Southwest. Spanish-speaking people had made their homes in the region since the days of the conquistadors in the 1500s. By 1848, from 80,000 to 100,000 Mexicanos, or Mexican citizens, lived in the territories given up by Mexico in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Most of these people remained in the Southwest and became U.S. citizens.

The treaty with Mexico promised Mexican Americans full citizenship rights, the right to keep their property, and the right to use their language. These promises were not kept. Armed with the belief that they were a superior people, white settlers pushed Mexicanos off their land. Whites also made it illegal for Mexicano children to speak Spanish in schools. They found ways to keep Mexicanos from exercising their right to vote.

Mexicanos protested each of these assaults on their rights. But the government did little to protect them. Before long, Mexican Americans found themselves, in the words of one historian, "foreigners in their native land."

The problems of prejudice, poverty, and lack of political power persisted well into the 20th century. Despite much progress, many of these problems are still with us today.

Yet, Mexican Americans also had a deep influence on their new country. Even though most white settlers had little respect for Mexican Americans, they freely borrowed much that was useful from them. Spanish words and Mexican foods, laws, technology, and architecture all became a lasting part of the Southwest culture. In this chapter, you will learn about many contributions Mexicanos made to American life.

Section 2 - Mining

Mining in the West developed in three waves—gold, silver, and copper. Each wave depended on the contribution of Mexican miners. Mexicanos came to the Southwest with a rich mining tradition. They knew where to look for precious metals and how to get them out of the ground.

Gold Mining The Americans who rushed to California in 1849 had many skills. But they knew nothing about mining. Mexicanos introduced them to the batea (bah-TAY-ah), or gold pan. Miners scooped up mud from streambeds with the batea. Then they swished it around to wash away the lightweight sand. The heavier flakes of gold sank to the bottom of the pan.

Mexicanos also brought the riffle box to the goldfields. The bottom of this long box was crossed with pieces of wood called riffles. As mud washed through the box, the heavy gold sank and was trapped behind the riffles. The riffle box was used extensively by both American and Chinese miners.

Before long, miners discovered that the gold they were picking up in streams came from veins of quartz rock in the Sierra Nevada. Quartz mining was a mystery to Americans, but it was familiar to Mexicanos. Mexicanos taught other miners how to dig the quartz out of mountains. They also showed miners how to use a simple arrastra (ar-RAS-trah), or grinding mill, to crush the rock so they could easily remove the gold.

Silver and Copper Mining A Mexicano miner sparked the West's first big silver strike. In 1859, a prospector named Henry Comstock was looking for gold in Nevada. Much to his annoyance, his gold was mixed with a lot of worthless "blue stuff." One day, a Mexicano miner looked at the blue stuff and started shouting, "Mucha plata! Mucha plata!" ("Much silver!") In its first 20 years, the Comstock Lode yielded over $300 million in silver and gold.

Mexicanos discovered copper in the Southwest in the early 1800s. When Americans began to mine copper in Arizona, they turned to Mexican miners for help. By 1940, Arizona mines had produced $3 billion worth of copper—copper that carried electricity and telephone calls to millions of homes across America.

Section 3 - Cattle Ranching

During the rodeo, vaqueros drove unmarked cattle to special roundup areas. [illegible]..

Cattle ranching in the West was built on traditions brought north from Mexico. Spanish colonists imported the first cattle to the Americas. The animals adapted well to the dry conditions of Mexico and the American Southwest. In time, millions of Spanish cattle ran wild in Texas and California.

Spanish cattle were thin, wiry creatures with long, wide-spreading horns. They moved quickly and were dangerous. Californios (Mexicanos in California) often found themselves dodging behind trees or diving into ditches to escape the charge of an angry longhorn.

With cattle so abundant, Californios and Tejanos found ranching to be a good business. So did the Americans who learned the cattle business from Mexican rancheros, or ranchers.

The Rancho Western cattle ranching was nothing like dairy farming in the East. Eastern dairy farms were small family businesses that produced mostly milk, butter, and cheese. By comparison, western ranchos were huge. In the arid Southwest, large grants of land were needed to provide enough food and water for cattle herds. Instead of dairy products, the main products of ranchos were meat, hides, and tallow (fat).

Ranch life followed traditions that had been developed in Spain and perfected in Mexico. Rancheros spent most of their day on horseback, overseeing their land and herds. Caring for the cattle was the work of hired vaqueros (vah-KAIR-ohs), or cowboys.

The Roundup Among the vaqueros' most important jobs were the rodeo, or roundup, and branding. Branding, or using a hot iron to burn a mark into the hide of cattle, was essential because herds

belonging to different owners mixed together on unfenced grasslands. To avoid conflicts, every owner had to mark his cattle with a distinctive brand.

During the rodeo, vaqueros drove unbranded calves to a roundup area. There, the calves were branded with the brand their mothers bore.

As Americans took up ranching, they adopted the rancheros' practice of branding cattle. Along with cowboys and the roundup, cattle brands are still part of ranch life in the West.

Section 4 - The Cowboy

Hollywood movies make it seem that nothing is more American than the western cowboy. Cowboys, however, learned their job from the Mexican vaquero. Across the Southwest, vaqueros were admired for their skill at riding, roping, and handling cattle. American cowboys adopted the vaqueros' clothes and gear, as well as much of their language.

Cowboy Clothes and Gear From head to toe, cowboys dressed in clothing borrowed from the vaqueros. For example, the cowboys' "tengallon hats," which shaded their eyes and sometimes served as a water pail or a pillow, came from the vaqueros' wide-brimmed sombreros (sohm-BRER-ohs). The leather chaps that protected the cowboys' legs from cacti and sagebrush were modeled on the vaqueros' chaparreras (chap-ar-REHR-ahs). The high-heeled, pointed-toe boots that slipped so easily into the cowboys' stirrups were based on the vaqueros' botas (BO-tas). Even the poncho that protected cowboys from cold and rain was borrowed from the vaqueros.

Mexicanos also invented the western, or cowboy, saddle, with its useful horn. The saddles brought to America from Europe did not have horns. When a vaquero on a European saddle roped a steer, he had to tie his rope to the horse's tail to keep it anchored. This method was hard on both the horse and the rider. By adding a horn to the saddle, vaqueros made their job easier—and their horses' job as well.

Cowboys borrowed another essential piece of gear from the vaqueros: la riata (la ree-AH-tah), or the lariat. Vaqueros were masters of the art of throwing a 60-foot rope great distances with amazing accuracy. This skill was especially useful for roping calves during a roundup. In a remarkable display of roping skill, a vaquero named José Romero once roped a full-grown eagle right out of the sky.

Cowboy Lingo American cowboys borrowed or adapted many ranching words from the vaqueros as well. The terms bronco, stampede, corral, lasso, burro, buckaroo, and vamoose all come from Spanish-Mexican words. So do mesa, canyon, mesquite, chaparral, and other terms used to describe the southwestern landscape. The cowboy slang word for jail, hoosegow, came from the Spanish juzgado (hooz-GA-doh). And of course, the terms ranch and rancher came from rancho and ranchero.

Section 5 - Sheep Raising

In New Mexico, the most important industry was sheep raising. From the founding of the territory up to the Mexican Cession, sheep fed, clothed, and supported Spanish and Mexican settlers.

The Spanish brought a long tradition of sheep raising to the Americas. Two kinds of sheep were raised in Spain: the merinos (meh-REE-nohs) with their fine wool and the churros (CHURrohs) with their coarse wool. The Spanish brought the scrawny churro to New Mexico, and for good reason. This tough little sheep knew how to survive in a dry environment like that of the Southwest.

The Spanish Sheep-Raising System When Americans came to New Mexico, they did not think of sheep raising as a business. In the East, a farmer might raise a few sheep as a sideline, but not large herds. Once they saw the Spanish sheep-raising system in New Mexico, however, some Americans changed their minds.

Under the Spanish system, sheep raising was a large and well-organized business. The Spanish governor of New Mexico, for example, once owned 2 million sheep and employed 2,700 workers.

At the top of this business stood the patron (pah-TROHN), or owner of the herds. Below him were several layers of managers. These supervisors and range bosses spent their days on horseback, checking range conditions and the health of the sheep.

The lowest-level worker was the pastor (pahs-TOHR), or herder. Each pastor was responsible for 1,500 to 2,000 sheep. A pastor stayed with his flock night and day, slowly guiding it from place to place so that the sheep could graze as they moved. During spring lambing season, the pastor assisted with difficult births, cared for orphaned lambs, and helped the newborns survive. One pastor described this busy time as a “month-long hell of worry and toil.”

Americans Adopt the Spanish System Americans soon adopted the Spanish system as their own. Large-scale sheep raising spread from New Mexico across the Southwest. In California, the churro was crossed with the merino to produce a sheep with far better wool. As a result, between 1862 and 1880, U.S. wool production soared from 5 million to 22 million pounds a year.

Section 6 - Irrigated Farming

Americans coming to the Southwest knew as little about irrigated farming as they did about mining, cattle ranching, and sheep raising. In the East, enough rain fell year-round to water a farmer’s crops. Irrigation was unnecessary and unknown. But in the Southwest, where six months could go by with no rain, irrigation was essential.

Mexicano settlers in the Southwest brought with them irrigation techniques that had been developed centuries earlier in Spain and North Africa. They borrowed other techniques from the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. When the settlers first arrived, the Pueblos were irrigating from 15,000 to 25,000 acres of cropland in the arid Rio Grande Valley.

The Mexican System of Irrigation Bringing water to fields involved an enormous amount of work. First, farmers had to redirect water from local streams to their fields. They began by building a dam of rocks, earth, and brush across the stream. The water that backed up behind the dam was brought to the fields by irrigation ditches.

To keep from wasting this precious water, Mexicanos carefully leveled their fields. Then they divided the fields into squares. Each square was marked off by a wall of earth high enough to hold in water. When one square had been soaked with water, farmers made a hole in its wall. The water then flowed to the next square. The farmers continued in this way until the entire field was soaked. This method of irrigation was known as the Mexican system.

America's Fruit Basket Using crops introduced by Mexicanos and the Mexican system of irrigation, American settlers turned the Southwest into America's "fruit basket." Among the many fruits brought by Mexicanos to the Southwest were grapes, dates, olives, apples, walnuts, pears, plums, peaches, apricots, and quinces. Mexicano settlers also brought the first citrus fruits—lemons, limes, and oranges—to the region. Many of these fruits were unknown in the East, where the climate was too cold for them to grow. But they thrived in sunny Arizona and California. With the help of Mexicano farmworkers, American farmers transformed dry deserts into irrigated fruit orchards and citrus groves.

Section 7 - Food

In 1835, William Heath Davis became one of the first Americans to settle in California. There he got his first taste of Mexican food. Davis later wrote of the Californios,

> Their tables were frugally [simply] furnished, the food clean and
>
> inviting, consisting mainly of good beef broiled on an iron rod,
>
> or steaks with onions, also mutton [sheep], chicken, eggs . . .
>
> The bread was tortillas; sometimes made with yeast. Beans
>
> were a staple dish . . . Their meat stews were excellent when
>
> not too highly seasoned with red pepper.

Davis may not have known it, but the food he was enjoying in California brought together the best of two worlds.

A Food Revolution The Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1521 began one of the great food revolutions in history. The Spanish came to Mexico in search of gold, but the greatest treasures they found were Indian foods unknown in Europe. These foods included corn, tomatoes, chocolate, peanuts, vanilla, beans, squash, avocados, coconuts, sunflower seeds, and chili peppers.

The Spanish shipped these new foods back to Spain. From there, they spread throughout Europe, greatly expanding people's food choices.

In turn, the Spanish brought the foods of Europe to Mexico. They introduced meats such as pork, beef, lamb, chicken, and goat. They brought nuts and grains such as almonds, walnuts, rice, wheat, and barley. They planted fruits and vegetables such as apples, oranges, grapes, olives, lettuce, carrots,

sugarcane, and potatoes (which they discovered in Peru). And they introduced herbs and spices such as cinnamon, parsley, coriander, oregano, and black pepper.

A New Style of Cooking Mexican cooks combined these foods of diverse origins to create a rich and flavorful style of cooking that was neither Indian nor Spanish. It was distinctly Mexican.

As Americans settled the Southwest, they were introduced to Mexican food. Many of them liked the new tastes, and they borrowed recipes from Mexicano cooks. In Texas, the mingling of Mexican and American dishes resulted in a style of cooking known as Tex-Mex. Across America, a spicy stew of beef and beans known simply as chili became as American as apple pie.

Section 8 - Architecture

Rounded arches, thick walls, and red-tile roofs are characteristics of Spanish-style architecture.

Throughout the Southwest, the Mexicano contribution to architecture is easy to see. Many buildings can be found with the thick walls, red-tile roofs, rounded arches, and courtyards that are typical of Spanish architecture.

Spanish-style architecture took root in Mexico during the colonial period. Mexican settlers brought their knowledge of this tradition to the Southwest. Their missions, homes, and other structures were simple and attractive. They were ideally suited to the hot, dry climate of the Southwest.

Adobe Buildings Since wood was scarce in the Southwest, Mexicanos used adobe (ah-DOH-beh) bricks as their main building material. Adobe is a mixture of earth, grass, and water that is shaped into bricks and baked in the sun. Mexicanos covered their adobe homes with colorful red clay tiles. Besides being attractive and fireproof, a tile roof kept the adobe walls from being washed away during heavy rains.

Many adobe buildings featured patios and verandas. A patio is a roofless inner courtyard, often located at the center of a home. A veranda is a roofed porch or balcony extending along the outside of a building. Patios and verandas allowed Mexicanos to spend much of their time outdoors while still protected from the hot sun and dry desert winds.

Newcomers Adopt the Spanish Style Americans moving to the Southwest quickly saw the advantages of building with adobe. Because of their thick walls, adobe structures stayed cooler in summer and warmer in winter than the wood buildings that Americans from the East were used to. Adobe structures could also be easily constructed from locally available materials.

American settlers used adobe to build not only homes, but also courthouses, trading posts, post offices, and other buildings. Later, builders adapted Spanish architecture to new materials such as concrete and stucco. By the 1930s, nearly a million Spanish-style homes had been built in California. “Who would live in a structure of wood and brick if they could get a palace of mud?” wrote an admiring easterner. “The adobes [make] the most picturesque and comfortable [homes] . . . and harmonize . . . with the whole nature of the landscape.”

Section 9 - Laws

The Mexicanos of the Southwest were used to being governed by Mexican laws. These laws often differed from American laws. For example, Mexico had outlawed slavery in 1829. Slaves from the American South sometimes ran away to find freedom in Mexican settlements. (Recall that Mexico's abolition of slavery was one of the issues that led Texans to fight for their independence from Mexico.)

In time, both Mexican and American legal traditions would shape laws in the West. Particularly important were Mexicano laws governing mining, water, and community property.

Mining Law Before the discovery of gold in California, there was so little mining in the United States that Americans had no mining law. Once in the goldfields, the forty-niners desperately needed rules to keep order.

With the help of Mexicano miners, Americans developed a "law of the mines" based on Mexican mining law. California miners later carried this law of the mines to other parts of the Southwest.

Water Law The water law brought west by Americans worked well enough in the East, where rainfall was abundant. Under American law, water flowing across a field or farm belonged to the owner of that land. Landowners could use their water in whatever ways they wanted.

This principle did not work well in the West, where water was scarce and precious. Disputes over who controlled streams led to endless legal conflicts and even water wars.

To end these conflicts, settlers wrote new laws based on Mexican "pueblo law." Pueblo law said that water was too valuable to be owned or controlled by any one person. Instead, water belonged to an entire community and should be used for the benefit of all.

Community Property Law For women, the most important legal principle borrowed from Mexican law was the idea of community property. In eastern states, married women had few property rights. Any property acquired by a married couple—such as a home, farm, or business—belonged solely to the husband.

In contrast, Mexican law said that all property acquired during a marriage was "community property." If a couple separated, half of that property belonged to the wife, half to the husband.

American settlers liked the idea of sharing the gains of marriage between husband and wife. Today, Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, Wisconsin, and Louisiana are all community property states.

Section 10 - Entertainment

The Californios, observed William Heath Davis, "were about the happiest and most contented people I ever saw." Californios worked hard. But they also knew how to entertain themselves with music, dance, and fiestas (celebrations). Americans settling the Southwest shared in these entertainments.

Music and Dancing Mexicano music greatly influenced country and western music in the Southwest. The most important contribution was the corridor (kor-REE-doh), or folk ballad. A corrido is a dramatic story sung to the accompaniment of guitars. The subjects of corridos ranged from exciting tales of heroes and bandits to sad songs of love and betrayal.

American settlers admired the color and energy of traditional Mexicano dance. Dancing was an important part of any Mexicano fiesta. Favorite dances included the jota (HOH-tah), the fandango, and la bamba. The last of these, the bamba, was danced by a young woman balancing a full glass of water on her head. Generations of schoolchildren learned another popular dance, the jarabe tapatío (hah-RAH-beh tah-pah-TEE-oh), or "Mexican hat dance," as part of their southwestern cultural heritage.

[illegible]

Fiestas and Rodeos Throughout the year, Mexicanos held a variety of religious fiestas. One of the most important honored Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico. In San Antonio, Texas, Tejanos marked this day (December 12) with an elaborate procession to the cathedral. After attending church services, the Tejanos danced all night long in their homes.

Today, the most widely celebrated Mexicano holiday is El Cinco de Mayo (el SEEN-koh day MY-oh), which means the Fifth of May. This holiday commemorates an important victory in Mexico's fight for independence from French rule in 1862. Cinco de Mayo fiestas bring together Mexican and non-Mexican Americans to enjoy Mexicano music, dance, and food.

For millions of Americans, rodeo is an exciting professional sport. Rodeo's roots go back to cattle roundups on Mexicano ranchos. During these get-togethers, Mexicano cowboys competed with each other in events such as calf roping, bull riding, and bronco busting. American cowboys joined in these contests, and soon rodeos became annual events in western cities. To its many fans, the rodeo, with its mixed Mexicano and American heritage, represents the best of the West.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned about Mexicano contributions to the Southwest and how they have influenced life in the United States.

Mining Mexicano knowledge, skills, and techniques advanced the development of mining in the Southwest. These contributions helped build the gold, silver, and copper mining industries.

Cattle, Cowboys, and Sheep American settlers learned about cattle ranching, cowboy life, and sheep raising from Mexicanos. They adopted Mexicano traditions for raising cattle and sheep. The American cowboy's language was enriched by Spanish-Mexican words like burro, rodeo, and lasso.

Farming and Food White settlers in the Southwest adopted irrigation techniques that had been pioneered by Mexicanos and Pueblo Indians. They also learned to appreciate Mexicano food.

Architecture, Laws, and Entertainment Today, Mexicano culture survives in such American adaptations as Spanish-style homes and buildings as well as legal traditions regarding mining, water, and community property. Millions of Americans enjoy music, dances, festivals, and rodeos that come from Mexicano traditions.