

The Oregon Country

Essential Question

How did the belief in Manifest Destiny influence western settlement?

Reading Guide

Content Vocabulary

joint occupation (p. 359)	emigrant (p. 362)
mountain man (p. 360)	prairie schooner (p. 362)
rendezvous (p. 360)	Manifest Destiny (p. 363)

Academic Vocabulary

plus (p. 359)	access (p. 359)
---------------	-----------------

Key People and Events

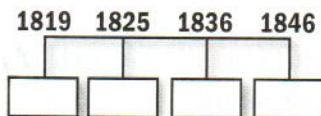
Adams-Onís Treaty (p. 359)

Oregon Trail (p. 362)

Henry Clay (p. 363)

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read, list key events in a time line like the one below.



American Diary

Families left everything familiar behind when they made the often uncomfortable and dangerous trip to the Western frontier. Martha Gay was a 13-year-old who, in 1851, left Springfield, Missouri, in a covered wagon. She later wrote about the experience of leaving loved ones and friends behind: "Farewell sermons were preached and prayers offered for our safety. . . . All places of business and the schools were closed . . . and everybody came to say goodbye to us."

—from *One Woman's West*

A mountain man gives advice to pioneers.

Rivalry in the Northwest

Main Idea Several nations claimed the Oregon Country, but many Americans wanted the land for its access to the Pacific Ocean.

History and You If you were deep in the wilderness and starving, what might you do to survive? Read to learn how pioneers survived as they traveled west.

The Oregon Country was the huge area located between the Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains north of California. It included all of what is now Oregon, Washington, and Idaho **plus** parts of Montana and Wyoming. The region also contained about half of what is now the Canadian province of British Columbia.

In the early 1800s, four nations claimed the vast, rugged land known as the Oregon Country. The United States based its claim on Robert Gray's discovery of the Columbia River in 1792 and on the Lewis and Clark expedition. Great Britain based its claim on British explorations of the Columbia River. Spain, which had also explored the Pacific

coast in the late 1700s, controlled California to the south. Russia had settlements that extended south from Alaska into Oregon.

Adams-Onís Treaty

Many Americans wanted control of Oregon in order to **access**, or get to, the Pacific Ocean. In 1819 Secretary of State John Quincy Adams negotiated the **Adams-Onís Treaty** with Spain. The Spanish agreed to set the limits of their territory at what is now California's northern border and to give up all claims to Oregon. In 1824 Russia also gave up its claim to the land south of Alaska.

In 1818 Adams worked out an agreement with Britain for **joint occupation** of the area. This meant that people from both the United States and Great Britain could settle there. When Adams became president in 1825, he proposed that the two nations divide Oregon along the 49°N line of latitude. Britain refused, insisting on a larger share. Unable to resolve their dispute, the two countries agreed to extend the joint occupation. In the following years, thousands of Americans streamed into the Oregon Country.

If You Were There "Hard Tack Snack"

Ingredients:

3 cups flour
3 teaspoons salt
1 cup water

Directions:

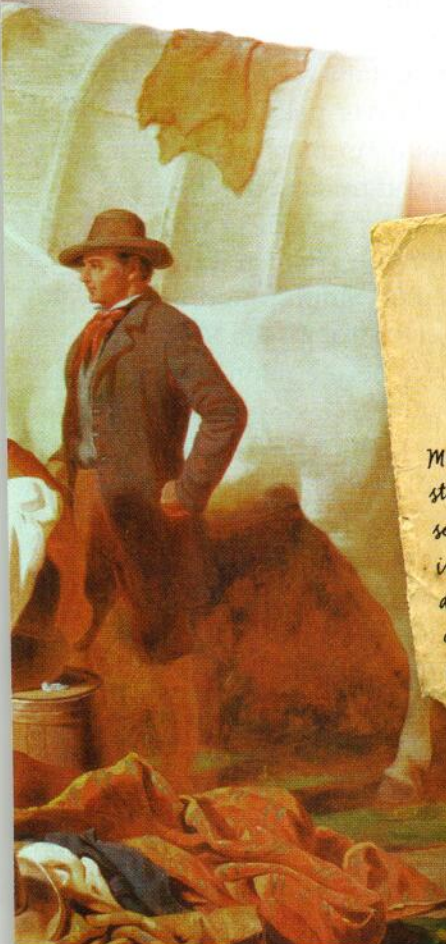
Mix all ingredients stirring until the dough is too stiff to stir anymore. Knead the dough, adding flour so mixture is very dry. Roll out dough to 1/4 inch thick sheet. With a fork, poke holes all over the dough. Bake for 30 minutes in a very hot oven or over a fire until hard. Break into pieces and store in a bag or box.

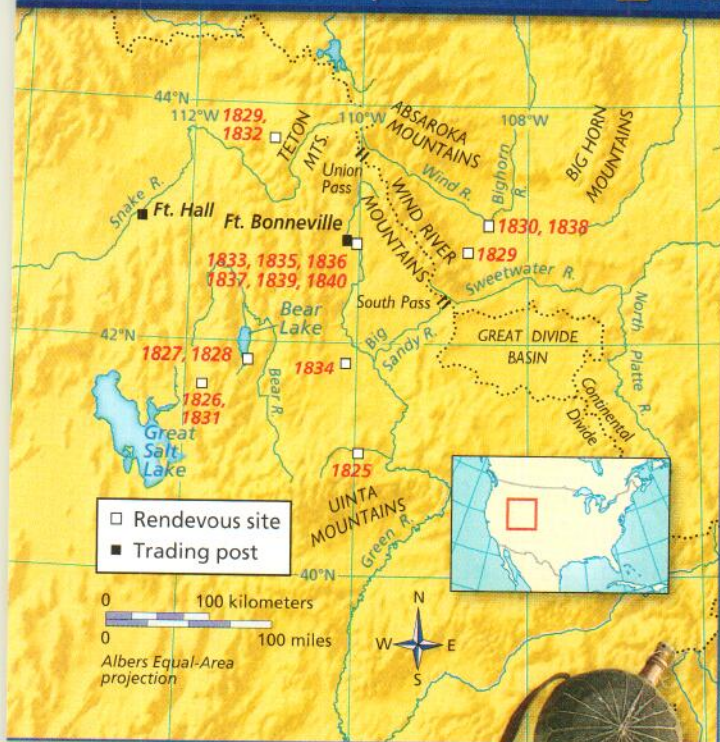


▲ As you traveled west, you might have snacked on hard tack.

Critical Thinking

Describing What types of food might be good to take on a long trip in a covered wagon?



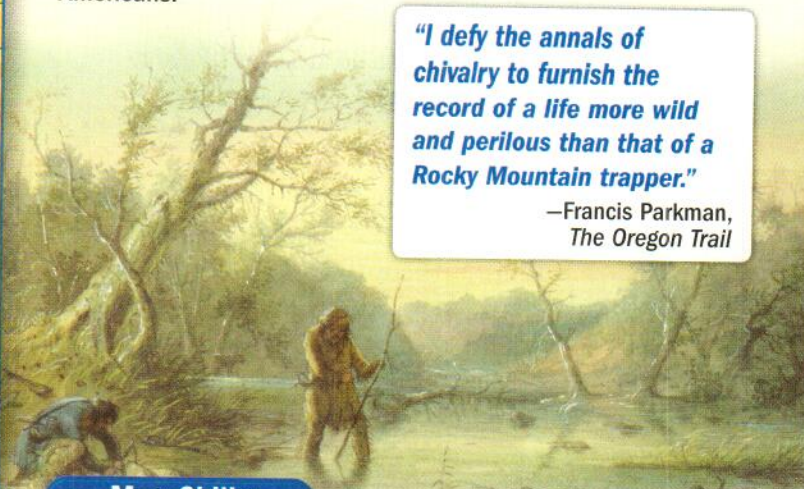


Type of canteen used by mountain men ▶



Life in the Mountains The lives of mountain men were difficult and unpredictable. Mountain men often faced the threat of starvation, dehydration, extreme heat, frigid cold, and deadly attacks by animals and hostile Native Americans.

"I defy the annals of chivalry to furnish the record of a life more wild and perilous than that of a Rocky Mountain trapper."
—Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*



Map Skills

Location What rendezvous site was used most often?

Maps in Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or glencoe.com.

Mountain Men

The first Americans to reach the Oregon Country were not farmers but fur traders. They came to trap beaver, whose skins were in great demand in the eastern United States and in Europe. The British established several trading posts in the region, as did merchant John Jacob Astor of New York. In 1808 Astor organized the American Fur Company. It became the most powerful fur company in America. Astor traded on the East Coast, the Pacific Northwest, and China.

At first the merchants traded for furs that the Native Americans supplied. Gradually American adventurers joined the trade. These people, who spent most of their time in the Rocky Mountains, came to be known as **mountain men**. These tough, independent men made their living by trapping beaver. Many had Native American wives and adopted Native American ways. They lived in buffalo-skin lodges and dressed in fringed buckskin pants, moccasins, and beads.

Some mountain men worked for fur-trading companies; others worked for themselves. Throughout the spring and early summer, they hiked across the mountains, setting traps and then collecting the beaver pelts. As they did their work, the mountain men explored the mountains, valleys, and trails of the West. Jim Beckwourth, an African American from Virginia, explored Wyoming's Green River. Robert Stuart and Jedediah Smith found the South Pass, a broad break through the Rockies. South Pass later became the main route that settlers took to Oregon.

In late summer, mountain men gathered for a **rendezvous** (RAHN•dih•voo), or meeting. The annual rendezvous was the most important event of the year for mountain men. They met with the trading companies to exchange their "hairy banknotes"—beaver skins—for traps, guns, coffee, and other goods. They met old friends and exchanged news. They relaxed by competing in races and swapping stories about their most exciting adventures.

Mountain men had to be resourceful. They needed courage and intelligence in order to survive in the wilderness. For example, trapper Joe Meek told how, when faced with starvation, he once held his hands “in an anthill until they were covered with ants, then greedily licked them off.” The mountain men took pride in joking about the dangers they faced.

Over time, the mountain men could no longer make a living by trapping because most of the beaver were killed. Some moved to Oregon and settled on farms. With their knowledge of the western lands though, several mountain men, such as Jim Bridger and Kit Carson, found work as guides. They led the parties of settlers now streaming west. Beginning in the 1830s, the mountain men carved out several east-to-west passages that played a vital role in western settlement. The most popular route was the Oregon Trail. Others included the California Trail and the Santa Fe Trail.

✓ Reading Check Explain Why did trading posts develop in the Oregon Country?

Oregon and Manifest Destiny

Main Idea Many people believed that God had given the entire continent to Americans and wanted them to settle western land.

History and You When you prepare to take a trip, what types of items do you pack? Read how pioneers made a 2,000-mile journey, carrying only what they would need in a covered wagon.

In the 1830s, Americans began traveling to the Oregon Country to settle. Economic troubles in the East and reports of Oregon’s fertile land made the West look attractive.

The Whitman Mission

Among the first settlers of the Oregon Country were missionaries who wanted to bring Christianity to the Native Americans. Dr. Marcus Whitman and his wife, Narcissa, went to Oregon in 1836 and built a mission among the Cayuse people near the present site of Walla Walla, Washington.

Primary Source The Whitman Mission

A Settlement in the Oregon Country In 1836 Dr. Marcus Whitman and his new bride, Narcissa, arrived at Waiilatpu, on the Walla Walla River in present-day Washington. The Whitmans built a mission to provide medical care and convert the Cayuse to Christianity. Narcissa’s journals provide a vivid account of their experiences. Her initial optimism turned to frustration as the Cayuse resisted their efforts.

“They [the Cayuse] are an exceedingly proud . . . people, and keep us constantly . . . [practicing] patience and forbearance. . . . Notwithstanding all this, there are many redeeming qualities in them, else we should have been discouraged long ago. We are more and more encouraged the longer we stay among them.”

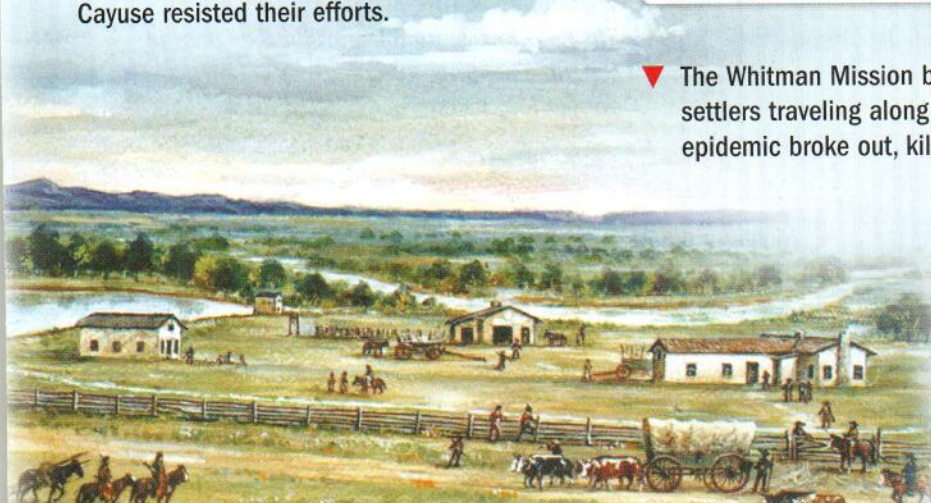
—Narcissa Whitman, in a letter to her mother



▼ The Whitman Mission became a primary stopping point for settlers traveling along the Oregon Trail. In 1847 a measles epidemic broke out, killing many Cayuse children.

Critical Thinking

Drawing Conclusions Why would people traveling to the Oregon Country stop at the Whitman mission?



New settlers unknowingly brought measles to the mission. An epidemic killed many children of the Cayuse. Blaming the Whitmans for the sickness, the Cayuse attacked the mission in November 1847 and killed the Whitmans and 11 others. Despite this, the flood of settlers into Oregon continued.

The Oregon Trail

In the early 1840s, "Oregon fever" swept through the Mississippi Valley. The depression caused by the Panic of 1837 hit the region hard. People formed societies to gather information about Oregon and to plan and make the long trip. The "great migration" had

begun. Tens of thousands of people made the trip. These pioneers were called **emigrants** because they left the United States to go to Oregon.

Before the difficult 2,000-mile (3,219-km) journey, these pioneers stuffed their canvas-covered wagons, called **prairie schooners**, with supplies. From a distance these wagons looked like schooners, or ships, at sea. Gathering in Independence or other towns in Missouri, they followed the **Oregon Trail** across the Great Plains, along the Platte River, and through the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. After they crossed the mountains, they traveled north and west along the Snake and Columbia Rivers into the Oregon Country.

Oregon Country, 1846



Settling the Northwest After the War of 1812, the United States and Britain agreed that settlers from both countries could live in the Oregon Country. Most of the British who lived in the region were trappers, while most of the Americans were farmers. The British Hudson's Bay Company maintained order.

Native Americans relied on the Columbia River for transportation, as well as a source of food. The river was also valuable to white settlers. ▼

"The buffalo will dwindle away, and the large wandering communities [of Native Americans] who depend on them . . . must be broken and scattered. . .

Within a few years the traveler may pass in tolerable security through their country. . . Its danger and its charm will have disappeared."

—Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*



◀ Most emigrants packed their wagons so full that they had to make the long trip on foot.

Map Skills

Location What geographic feature lies at about 41° N and 115° W?

Maps in Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or glencoe.com.

Manifest Destiny

Since colonial times many Americans had believed their nation had a special role to fulfill. For years people thought the nation's mission should be to serve as a model of freedom and democracy. In the 1800s that vision changed. Many believed that the mission of the United States was to spread freedom by occupying the entire continent. In 1819 John Quincy Adams expressed what many Americans were thinking when he said expansion to the Pacific was as inevitable "as that the Mississippi should flow to the sea."

In the 1840s, New York newspaper editor John O'Sullivan expressed the idea of a national mission in more specific words. O'Sullivan declared it was America's "**Manifest Destiny**" to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us." O'Sullivan meant that the United States was clearly destined—set apart for a special purpose—by God to extend its boundaries all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

"Fifty-Four Forty or Fight"

Many Americans wanted the United States to own all of Oregon. In the 1844 presidential election, James K. Polk, the Democratic nominee, supported this demand. Democrats used the slogan "Fifty-Four Forty or Fight," referring to the line of latitude they believed should be the nation's northern border in Oregon.

Polk's Whig opponent, **Henry Clay**, did not take a strong position on the Oregon issue. Polk won the election because Whig support was not united behind Clay.

A firm believer in Manifest Destiny, Polk was focused on making Oregon part of the United States. Britain, however, would not accept a border at "Fifty-Four Forty." This would mean giving up its land claim entirely. In 1846 the two countries finally compromised. They set the border between American and British parts of Oregon at latitude 49°N.



Reading Check

Defining What is Manifest Destiny?

Section 1 Review

History ONLINE
Study Central™ To review this section, go to glencoe.com.

Vocabulary

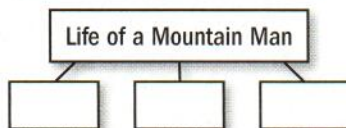
1. Use each of these terms in a sentence that will help explain its meaning: **plus**, **access**, **joint occupation**, **mountain man**, **rendezvous**, **emigrant**, **prairie schooner**, **Manifest Destiny**.

Main Ideas

2. **Specifying** Which nations claimed the Oregon Country? How did John Quincy Adams help resolve the claims?
3. **Explaining** What was James K. Polk's campaign slogan in the 1844 election? What did the slogan mean?

Critical Thinking

4. **Analyzing** During the 1840s, many more Americans than British settled in the Oregon Country. How do you think this influenced negotiations over the territory?
5. **Summarizing** Create a diagram like the one below to list details about what life was like for a mountain man. Add more boxes to your diagram if necessary.



6. **Creative Writing** Take the role of a pioneer about to travel to the Oregon Country. A friend asks why you are leaving. Write your answer in the voice of your character. Include details about who you are, your reasons for going, and your feelings about the journey ahead.

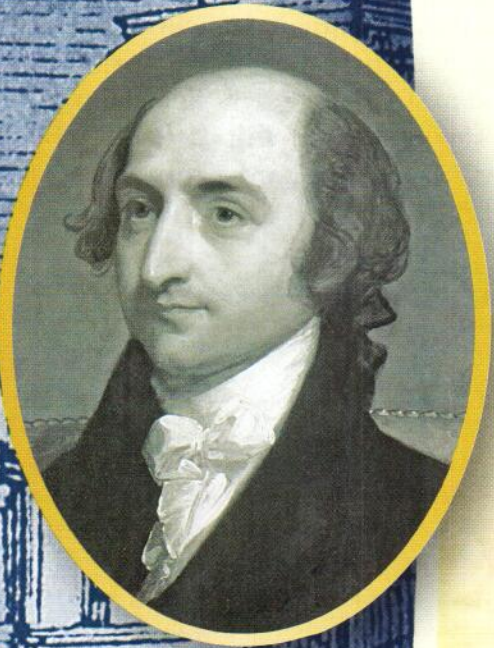
7. **Answer the Essential Question**
How did the belief in Manifest Destiny influence western settlement?

**YOU
DECIDE**

Was Manifest Destiny Justified?

Building Background

In 1845 a magazine editor named John L. O'Sullivan declared that it was the "manifest destiny" of Americans to expand westward to the Pacific Ocean. Many Americans believed in this concept of Manifest Destiny—the idea that God had given the continent to Americans and wanted them to settle western land. Manifest Destiny did have its opponents, however. Long-time public servant Albert Gallatin expressed his opposition to Manifest Destiny and to war with Mexico in an 1847 pamphlet *Peace with Mexico*.



Spanish mission in the Southwest

NO

ALBERT GALLATIN

It is said, that the people of the United States have a hereditary superiority of race over the Mexicans, which gives them the right to subjugate¹ and keep in bondage the inferior nation. . . .

Is it compatible with the principle of Democracy, which rejects every hereditary claim of individuals, to admit a hereditary superiority of races? . . . Can you for a moment suppose, that a very doubtful descent from men, who lived one thousand years ago, has transmitted to you a superiority over your fellow-men? . . . At this time, the claim is but a pretext for covering and justifying unjust usurpation² and unbounded ambition. . . .

Among ourselves, the most ignorant, the most inferior, either in physical or mental faculties,³ is recognized as having equal rights, and he has an equal vote with any one, however superior to him in all those respects. This is founded on the immutable⁴ principle that no one man is born with the right of governing another man.

¹ **subjugate** conquer

² **usurpation** seizure

³ **faculties** abilities

⁴ **immutable** unchanging

YES

JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN

Texas is now ours. Already, before these words are written, her convention has undoubtedly ratified the acceptance, by her congress, of our proffered⁵ invitation into the Union. . . . Her star and her stripe may already be said to have taken their place in the glorious blazon⁶ of our common nationality. . . .

The next session of Congress will see the representatives of the new young state in their places in both our halls of national legislation, side by side with those of the old Thirteen. . . .

Other nations have undertaken to intrude themselves into [the question of Texas. They have come] between us and the proper parties to the case, in a spirit of hostile interference against us, for the avowed⁷ object of thwarting⁸ our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.



⁵ **proffered** offered

⁶ **blazon** showy display

⁷ **avowed** declared openly

⁸ **thwarting** stopping

DBQ Document-Based Questions

- 1. Summarizing** According to O'Sullivan, what was Manifest Destiny?
- 2. Making Inferences** Why do you think O'Sullivan mentions Texas's future representation in Congress?
- 3. Analyzing** What does Albert Gallatin think is the real motivation underlying the idea of Manifest Destiny?
- 4. Evaluating** Imagine you could interview Gallatin and O'Sullivan. Write a list of three questions you could ask each man about his views on Manifest Destiny.

Texas celebrates entering the Union.