

# WESTWARD EXPANSION

1770 TO 1900

## CALIFORNIA MISSIONS TO HAWAII BECOMES A TERRITORY

### ERA SUMMARY – WESTWARD EXPANSION

By 1848, the United States had established state governments in the entire region east of the Mississippi, and had wrestled control of much of the American southwest from Mexico. Within fifty years the rest of the mainland was settled and all but five of the eventual 50 states were admitted to the union.

**California**—The first European settlers in California were Franciscan monks who built dozens of missions along the California coast between the years 1770 and 1833. At its height, the missions ministered to over 150,000 natives, but their fortunes fell in the 1830s when a republican government "disestablished" the missions and their property fell into the hands of bandits, speculators, and politicians. The native residents were left with nothing and by the time [Kit Carson](#) led the first American expedition into the region, in 1842, the native population had plummeted.



PASQUAL VISITS SAN FRANCISCO

At the time the Mexican-American War broke out in 1846, there were about 1500 Americans and non-Hispanic whites in California, and about five times that many Mexican Californios. As soon as rumors of hostilities reached the settlers a small group of Americans and other foreigners seized the garrison at Sonoma and declared California an Independent Republic. As soon as [John C. Fremont](#) arrived on the scene however, they turned over control of the government to the American army.

Scarcely a year after Mexico ceded California to the United States, gold was discovered at [John Sutter's](#) Mill, and the immigrant population swelled. Speculators came from all over the world, including hundreds of immigrants from China. Within a year, California became the 31st state in the union. At first almost all settlers came by boat, so San Francisco became the largest and most important commercial center in the region. In 1869, only twenty years after gold was discovered, the first transcontinental railroad made travel easier and opened up larger areas for settlement.

**Northwestern States**—The Columbia River and Puget Sound were discovered and claimed for Britain by [George Vancouver](#) in 1795. Ten years later [Meriwether Lewis](#) and [William Clark](#) led

an overland expedition of the region. Fort Astoria, the first settlement in Oregon territory, was founded by [John Jacob Astor](#) a few years later to establish a fur-trading post with the Northwest Indians. Traders associated with Astor's company also discovered a pass through the Rockies in Wyoming and established an overland route that later became the Oregon Trail.



**MACKENZIE AND THE MEN JUMPED  
OVERBOARD**

In the early 19th century both Britain and the United States had fur-trading operations in the Pacific Northwest, but neither founded permanent settlements. Beginning slowly in the 1830's and much faster after 1846, a steady stream of pioneers began to settle the area. Marcus Whitman started one of the first missionary settlements in the region in 1836 and seven years later lead the first wagon train into southwest Washington (before they were massacred by Indians). Other early settlers, such as the Denny Party that settled Seattle in 1851, arrived by boat.

Once the boundary disputes between the United States and Canada were resolved, migration to the Northwest states began in earnest. Over 400,000 pioneers arrived by way of the Oregon Trail, and when the transcontinental railroad system became established, the population of all the Northwest states grew so quickly that all of the northwest States, including Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, were admitted to the union by 1890. Six years later, gold was discovered in the Klondike, and the economy boomed.

## CHARACTERS – WESTWARD EXPANSION

### AMERICAN EXPLORERS AND MISSIONARIES

|                          |           |  |
|--------------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>William Clark</b>     | 1770–1838 | Led an expedition up the Missouri River, map-making, gathering information, and looking for a passage to the Pacific Ocean.        |
| <b>Merriwether Lewis</b> | 1774–1809 | With William Clark, followed the Missouri river to its source, crossed the Rockies and followed the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean. |
| <b>Zebulon Pike</b>      | 1779–1813 | Led an expedition to explore the source of the Arkansas river. Followed the river to Colorado.                                     |
| <b>Kit Carson</b>        | 1809–1868 | Famed Frontiersman who guided Fremont on his expedition to Colorado, and served during the Mexican-American war.                   |
| <b>John C. Fremont</b>   | 1813–1890 | American explorer who, along with Kit Carson, led an expedition to California by way of Wyoming and Nevada.                        |
| <b>Buffalo Bill</b>      | 1846–1917 | Colorful character of the Old American West. Produced a wild-west show that toured eastern towns with western frontier heroes.     |
| <b>Marcus Whitman</b>    | 1802–1847 | Early missionary who founded the first settlement in Washington State near the Columbia river. Massacred by Indians.               |
| <b>General Custer</b>    | 1839–1876 | Cavalry general whose force was ambushed and massacred by the Sioux at the <i>Battle of Little Bighorn</i> .                       |
| <b>Brigham Young</b>     | 1801–1877 | Leader of the Church of Latter Day Saints after the death of Smith. Led the Mormons to Utah.                                       |
| <b>John Sutter</b>       | 1803–1880 | Founded a European settlement in the Sacramento Valley where gold was found in 1849.   |

### SPANISH EXPLORERS AND MISSIONARIES

|                              |           |  |
|------------------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>Francisco de Coronado</b> | 1510–1554 | Spanish explorer who was a governor in Mexico, and explored regions of the Southwest United States.                                  |
| <b>Junipero Serra</b>        | 1713–1784 | Franciscan Friar who founded over a dozen missions along the coast of California.  |
| <b>Juan Bautista de Anza</b> | 1736–1788 | Spanish governor of New Mexico who explored Arizona and California and established an overland route to the San Francisco peninsula. |

### NATIVE CHIEFTAINS AND LEADERS

|                     |           |  |
|---------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>Black Hawk</b>   | 1767–1838 | Important Indian chief in the Illinois territory. Inspired the Sauks to resist the Americans during the Black Hawk War.  |
| <b>Sacajewea</b>    | 1787–1812 | Indian woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark during their explorations of the Louisiana Purchase.                        |
| <b>Winnemucca</b>   | 1820–1882 | Chief of a Piute tribe. First befriended the white settlers, but rebelled when his tribe was mistreated.                 |
| <b>Geronimo</b>     | 1829–1909 | Last Apache Warrior to hold out against the U.S. Army. Finally capitulated and became a celebrity.                       |
| <b>Sitting Bull</b> | 1831–1890 | Medicine man who organized resistance to U.S. Army. His warriors defeated Custer at Little Bighorn.                      |
| <b>Captain Jack</b> | 1837–1873 | Led a tribe of Modocs off the Klamath reservation to their native home, where they held out in caves for several months. |
| <b>Crazy Horse</b>  | 1840–1877 | Dakota Indian chief who fought against the American army at <i>Rosebud</i> and <i>Little Big Horn</i> .                  |
| <b>Chief Joseph</b> | 1840–1904 | Led Nez Percés in a resistance against the encroachment of white settlers. Finally surrendered.                          |
| <b>Kalakaua</b>     | 1836–1891 | Last King of the Hawaiian Islands.   |
| <b>Liliokalani</b>  | 1838–1917 | Last Queen of the Hawaiian Islands.  |

# TIMELINE – WESTWARD EXPANSION

## CALIFORNIA

- 1598** Santa Fe established as the capital of the Spanish province of New Mexico
- 1769-70** Gaspar de Portola leads first Spanish expedition to Alta California.
- 1774-77** [Juan Bautista de Anza](#) leads second Spanish expedition to Alta California.
- 1770-84** [Junipero Serra](#) founds Missions in California
- 1833** California missions "disestablished". Property looted, sold to speculators. Native population plummets.
- 1842-46** Early [John C. Fremont](#) expeditions to California with [Kit Carson](#).
- 1846** "Bear Flag" revolt in Sonoma—California settlers revolt from Mexico.
- 1846-48** [Mexican American War](#) ends as Mexico is forced to sell California to America.
- 1849** Gold found at [John Sutter's](#) Mill. Gold Rush brings thousands of settlers to California.
- 1850** California admitted to the Union.
- 1906** San Francisco Earthquake.

## NORTHWESTERN STATES

- 1791-95** [George Vancouver](#) discovers the Columbia River and Puget Sound. Claims Oregon for Britain.
- 1804-06** [Meriwether Lewis](#) and [William Clark](#) expedition.
- 1840-46** Jesuit Pierre deSmet travels throughout Oregon Territory setting up Indian missions.
- 1846** Boundary dispute between Britain and the United States resolved. Border established at 49th parallel.
- 1843** [Marcus Whitman](#) leads wagon trains to Oregon Territory.
- 1847** Whitman Massacre kills 14 early settlers in Washington State.
- 1867** William Seward arranges for the U.S. to purchase Alaska from Russia.
- 1877** [Nez Perce War](#) led by [Chief Joseph](#)
- 1896** Klondike Gold Rush attracts settlers to Seattle and Alaska.
- 1899** Hawaii becomes an American Territory.

## GREAT PLAINS AND MOUNTAINS

- 1806-07** [Zebulon Pike](#) expedition to Colorado
- 1847** First Mormons, under the direction of [Brigham Young](#) arrive in Utah Territory.
- 1860-61** [Buffalo Bill](#) takes a route on the Pony Express at age 14.
- 1854-90** [Plains Indian Wars](#)
- 1862** Dakota War drives Santee Sioux out of Minnesota Territory
- 1863-65** [Colorado War](#) devastates Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, and Cheyenne tribes of the Rockies.
- 1866-68** Lakota and Cheyenne fight for their tribal lands in [Red Cloud's War](#) in Montana/Wyoming.

- 1876 [General Custer's](#) army of six hundred wiped out at [Battle of Little Bighorn](#) in Sioux territory.
- 1890 300 Lakotas killed at [Wounded Knee Massacre](#), when army attempts to confiscate guns.
- 1859 Pike's Peak Gold Rush brings settlers to Colorado
- 1869 First Transcontinental Railroad
- 1889-90 Six Northwestern States admitted to the Union: North and South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Wyoming

## RECOMMENDED READING – WESTWARD EXPANSION

### HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Otis Kaler - <a href="#">Seth of Colorado</a>         | <i>entire book</i>  |
| Otis Kaler - <a href="#">Philip of Texas</a>          | <i>entire book</i>  |
| Otis Kaler - <a href="#">Antoine of Oregon</a>        | <i>entire book</i>  |
| Otis Kaler - <a href="#">Martha of California</a>     | <i>entire book</i>  |
| Guerber - <a href="#">Story of the Great Republic</a> | <a href="#">Early Times in California</a> to <a href="#">Rush to California</a> (3)       |
| Cody - <a href="#">Adventures of Buffalo Bill</a>     | <i>entire book</i>  |
| Sabin - <a href="#">Book of Border Battles</a>        | <a href="#">The Battle of Adobe Walls</a> to <a href="#">When Ghost Shirts Failed</a> (7) |
| Sabin - <a href="#">Book of Frontier Fighters</a>     | <a href="#">Hugh Glass and Grizzly Bear</a> to <a href="#">The Sibley Scout</a> (10)      |
| Sabin - <a href="#">Book of Indian Warriors</a>       | <a href="#">Black-hawk the Sac Patriot</a> to <a href="#">The Ghost Dancers</a> (12)      |

### ALSO RECOMMENDED

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|--|--|
| Howard - <a href="#">Famous Indian Chiefs I Have Known</a> | <i>entire book</i>   |
| Hudson - <a href="#">Missions of California</a>            | <i>entire book</i>   |
| Sabin - <a href="#">With Lewis and Clark</a>               | <i>entire book</i>   |
| Sabin - <a href="#">With Lieutenant Pike</a>               | <i>entire book</i>   |
| Sabin - <a href="#">Gold Seekers of '49</a>                | <i>entire book</i>   |
| Eastman - <a href="#">Indian Heroes</a>                    | <i>entire book</i>   |
| Morris - <a href="#">Historical Tales - American I</a>     | <a href="#">Alaska Gold, Furs, and Fish</a> to <a href="#">How Hawaii Lost its Queen</a> (2) |
| Drake - <a href="#">Indian History for Young Folks</a>     | <a href="#">Indian Wars</a> to <a href="#">The Indians of the Present Day</a> (6)            |
| Grinnell - <a href="#">Trails of the Pathfinders</a>       | <i>entire book</i>   |
| Abbott - <a href="#">Kit Carson</a>                        | <i>entire book</i>   |
| Fitch - <a href="#">Junipero Serra</a>                     | <i>entire book</i>   |