

**America Under Martin Van Buren,
William H. Harrison, and John Tyler,
1837-1844**

*The Panic of 1837, The Oregon Trail,
Manifest Destiny*

From the Series
*America's Era of Expansion and Reform,
1817-1860*

**Produced by
Ancient Lights Educational Media**

Distributed by...



united learning

1560 SHERMAN AVENUE | SUITE 100 | EVANSTON, IL 60201

800.323.9084 | FAX 847.328.6706 | www.unitedlearning.com

This video is the exclusive property of the copyright holder. Copying, transmitting, or reproducing in any form, or by any means, without prior written permission from the copyright holder is prohibited (Title 17, U.S. Code Sections 501 and 506).

© 2003 Ancient Lights Educational Media

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Series	1
Introduction to the Program	1
Links to Curriculum Standards	2
Instructional Notes	4
Pre-Test	4
Student Preparation	4
Student Objectives	5
Introducing the Program	5
View the Program	5
Discussion Questions	6
Description of Blackline Masters	6
Extended Learning Activities	7
Answer Key	7
Script of Narration	10



This video is closed captioned.

The purchase of this program entitles the user to the right to reproduce or duplicate, in whole or in part, this teacher's guide and the blackline master handouts that accompany it for the purpose of teaching in conjunction with this program, **America Under Martin Van Buren, William H. Harrison, and John Tyler 1837-1844: *The Panic of 1837, The Oregon Trail, Manifest Destiny***. This right is restricted only for use with this program. Any reproduction or duplication in whole or in part of this guide and the blackline master handouts for any purpose other than for use with this program is prohibited.

**CLASSROOM/LIBRARY
CLEARANCE NOTICE**

This program is for instructional use. The cost of each program includes public performance rights as long as no admission charge is made. Public performance rights are defined as viewing of a video in the course of face-to-face teaching activities in a classroom, library, or similar setting devoted to instruction.

Closed Circuit Rights are included as a part of the public performance rights as long as closed-circuit transmission is restricted to a single campus. For multiple locations, call your United Learning representative.

Television/Cable/Satellite Rights are available. Call your United Learning representative for details.

Duplication Rights are available if requested in large quantities. Call your United Learning representative for details.

Quantity Discounts are available for large purchases. Call your United Learning representative for information and pricing. Discounts, and some special services, are not applicable outside the United States.

Your suggestions and recommendations are welcome. Feel free at any time to call United Learning at 1-800-323-9084.

**America Under Martin Van Buren, William H.
Harrison and John Tyler, 1837-1844**
The Panic of 1837, The Oregon Trail, Manifest Destiny
**Viewing Time: 14 minutes with a one-minute, five-question
Video Quiz**

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

This standards-based series of programs for grades 5-9 examines the period of expansion and reform that occurred in the United States starting with the presidency of James Monroe in 1817 and continued up to the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

The five programs in this series focus on key events that shaped the history of the United States from 1817 to 1860. Major topics examined are:

- U.S expansion and how it affected American Indians and foreign powers;
- How industrialization, immigration, expansion of slavery, and westward movement changed the lives of Americans and led toward regional tensions;
- The extension, restriction, and reorganization of American political democracy;
- The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

America Under Martin Van Buren, William H. Harrison and John Tyler, 1837-1844 *The Panic of 1837, The Oregon Trail, Manifest Destiny* presents the following major topics:

- The Panic of 1837
- The Pre-Emption Act
- California Pioneers and Sutter's Fort
- The Oregon Trail
- Manifest Destiny

LINKS TO CURRICULUM STANDARDS

The series of which this program is a part is correlated to the U.S. National History Standards, listed below (www.sscnet.ucla.edu)

U.S. National History Standard 1

United States Territorial Expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans.

Standard 1A

The student understands the international background and consequences of the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the Monroe Doctrine.

Standard 1B

The student understands federal and state Indian policy and the strategies for survival forged by Native Americans.

Standard 1C

The student understands Manifest Destiny, the nation's expansion to the Northwest, and the Mexican-American War.

U.S. National History Standard 2

How the Industrial Revolution, increasing immigration, the rapid expansion of slavery, and westward movement changed the lives of Americans and led to regional tensions.

Standard 2A

The student understands how the factory system and the transportation and market revolutions shaped regional patterns of economic development.

Standard 2B

The student understands the first era of American urbanization.

Standard 2C

The student understands how antebellum immigration changed American society.

Standard 2D

The student understands the rapid growth of “the peculiar institution” after 1800 and the varied experiences of African Americans under slavery.

Standard 2E

The student understands the settlement of the West.

U.S. National History Standard 3

The extension, restriction, and reorganization of political democracy after 1800.

Standard 3A

The student understands the changing character of American political life in "the age of the common man."

Standard 3B

The student understands how the debates over slavery influenced politics and sectionalism.

U.S. National History Standard 4

The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period.

Standard 4A

The student understands the abolitionist movement.

Standard 4B

The student understands how Americans strived to reform society and create a distinct culture.

Standard 4C

The student understands changing gender roles and the ideas and activities of woman reformers.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Before presenting this lesson to your students, we suggest that you preview the program, review the guide, and the accompanying Blackline Master activities in order to familiarize yourself with their content.

As you review the materials presented in this guide, you may find it necessary to make some changes, additions, or deletions to meet the specific needs of your class. We encourage you to do so; for only by tailoring this program to your class will they obtain the maximum instructional benefits afforded by the materials.

PRE-TEST

Pre-Test is an assessment tool intended to gauge student comprehension of the objectives prior to viewing the program. Explain that they are not expected to get all the answers correct. You can remind your students that these are key concepts that they should focus on while watching the program.

STUDENT PREPARATION

Set up a Learning Center with images relevant to the topics presented in this program such as:

- ✓ A map of the Oregon Trail featuring important sites.
- ✓ Images of "Broken Banknotes" and gold coins from the late 1830s.
- ✓ Pictures of Fort Vancouver, Fort Laramie, and Sutter's Fort.
- ✓ Graphs depicting U.S. immigration, countries of origin of immigrants, 1789-2003.
- ✓ Images of pioneers on the Oregon Trail.
- ✓ Images of Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, William H. Harrison, John Tyler, and John Augustus Sutter.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After viewing the program and completing the follow-up activities, students should be able to:

- Describe the routes and purposes of the Oregon and California trails.
- Describe key events in the administrations of Presidents Van Buren, Harrison, and Tyler.
- Explain the concept of Manifest Destiny.
- Explain the reasons for enacting the Pre-Emption Act.
- Explain some of the factors that contributed to the Panic of 1837.
- Describe the changes that occurred in the rate of U.S. immigration between 1820 and 1850.

INTRODUCING THE PROGRAM

Duplicate and administer **Blackline Master #1, Pre-Test**. Remind your students that they are not expected to know all the answers. Suggest that they use these questions as a guide for taking notes on the key concepts while viewing the program.

VIEW THE PROGRAM

Running Time: 14 minutes plus a one-minute, five-question Video Quiz.

Hand out **Blackline Master #3, Video Quiz**.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After viewing the program, you may find it helpful to discuss key concepts as a class. The following questions/statements may prove to be useful. You may also choose to use these topics to begin a discussion prior to viewing the program.

1. The dubious relationship between greedy bankers and greedy land speculators fueled the economic collapse of 1837. Discuss the reasons for backing up paper money with precious metals. How is paper money backed up today? Discuss and compare the events of the Panic of 1837 to the collapse of the banks during the Great Depression and the collapse of the savings and loan industry during the Reagan era. How is banking safeguarded and regulated today?
2. Discuss some of the difficulties involved in making the journey to Oregon in the early 1840s.
3. Discuss the importance of the idea of Manifest Destiny.
4. Discuss the problems associated with speculation in public lands that occurred in the U.S. in the 1830s.

DESCRIPTION OF BLACKLINE MASTERS

Blackline Master #1, Pre-Test, is an assessment tool intended to gauge student comprehension of the objectives prior to viewing the program.

Blackline Master #2, Post-Test, is an assessment tool to be administered after viewing the program and completing additional activities. The results of this assessment can be compared to the results of the Pre-Test to determine the change in student comprehension before and after participation in this lesson.

Blackline Master #3, Video Quiz, is intended to reinforce the key concepts of the program following the presentation of the

program. Student awareness that a **Video Quiz** will be given also helps promote attention to the video presentation.

Blackline Master #4, Crossword Puzzle, is a puzzle game based on information presented on the Vocabulary List (Blackline Masters #6 and #7).

Blackline Master #5, Timeline and Activity, reinforces dates relating to key events which occurred from 1836 to 1845.

Blackline Masters #6 and #7, Vocabulary List and Activity, include important names, people, places, and terms relating to events that occurred during this era in history.

EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Field trips to historic sites are the best way to savor the flavor of America's early days. Research papers, oral reports, news reports, or PowerPoint® presentations could be done on the following subjects:

- Biographical sketches of Martin Van Buren, John Augustus Sutter, Marcus Whitman, John Tyler, William Henry Harrison
- The Oregon Trail Journey
- Manifest Destiny
- The Pre-Emption Act
- The Panic of 1837
- A history of Fort Vancouver
- Changes in U.S. immigration from the 1820s to the 1850s.

ANSWER KEY

Blackline Master #1, Pre-Test

1. False. It sharply increased.
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. False. It was controlled by the United States and Great Britain.

Blackline Master #2, Post-Test

Fill in the blanks

1. Tyler
2. California Trail
3. Pre-Emption Act
4. Oregon Country, United States, Great Britain
5. Hudson's Bay Company, fur trading

Brief Essay on Manifest Destiny

Americans wanted the vast lands of the west, and in 1845, a writer coined the term "Manifest Destiny " to explain why. The concept of "Manifest Destiny," which helped fire the pioneering spirit of Americans, was based on three beliefs: first, that the nation needed more land for its rapidly growing population; second, that Americans could bring economic growth and democracy to places where they had never existed before; and third, that American territorial expansion was blessed by God because it was morally right.

Definitions:

1. *squatters* - A word used in the 19th century to describe people who live on land that they do not own. Squatters were very common in the United States in the 1830s.
2. *claim-jumpers* - A word used in the 1830s and 1840s to describe people (oftentimes land speculators) who would buy land that had already been developed by squatters just to make a profit, without ever intending to live on or work on that land. Also used to describe persons who stole mining claims.
3. *Bank of the United States* - Before Andrew Jackson's time, a bank in which the United States government's money was deposited. It oversaw and regulated the activities of the smaller state banks.
4. *veto* - The power of the U.S. President to overturn a law enacted by Congress.
5. *land speculator* - A person who makes a living through buying raw land cheaply and selling it for a profit.

Blackline Master #7, Vocabulary Activity

1. Panic of 1837, depression
2. Oregon Trail
3. Sacramento, California
4. Whigs
5. Martin Van Buren

SCRIPT OF NARRATION

America Under Martin Van Buren, William H. Harrison and John Tyler, 1837-1844: *The Panic of 1837, The Oregon Trail, Manifest Destiny*

During the first five years following the presidency of Andrew Jackson, three different men held the job of President of the United States. They were Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, and John Tyler. The first man, Martin Van Buren, had served as Vice-President under Jackson and was his hand-picked choice to be the eighth President. The second man, William Henry Harrison, America's ninth President, died after only a month in office and his term was finished out by his Vice-President, John Tyler, who became the tenth President of the United States upon Harrison's death. Under these three Presidents, the American frontier was pushed far to the west, the U.S. population reached 20 million, and the sale and settlement of public lands became a major focus of the federal government.

The Panic of 1837

Shortly after Martin Van Buren was sworn in as President in 1837, the year Michigan became a state, an economic disaster struck the nation. The Panic of 1837 resulted from the abrupt closure of a large number of American banks. These bank failures plunged the United States into the first major depression, or severe economic downturn, in its history. But the disaster President Van Buren confronted was not of his making and can be traced back to the actions of his predecessor, Andrew Jackson.

For Jackson had attempted to destroy the Bank of the United States, the well established private bank that handled the money of the federal government and that was run by his political enemies. This Bank also oversaw the activities of America's small state banks. Jackson used his power as President to veto, that is override, the law that allowed the Bank of the United States to operate. And he ordered that all the government's money be withdrawn from it. As a result, responsible oversight of the activities of America's banking industry was lost. Jackson's actions made it much easier for banks to make risky loans to unscrupulous land speculators—people who bought and sold government land to make a profit.

In the 1830s, small banks issued their own paper money to make loans. It was supposed to be "backed up" with gold or silver equal to its "face value," but it rarely was. Banks make money by charging "interest" fees for loans. The more loans they make, the more interest they are paid. But back then, the amount of paper money the banks loaned out greatly exceeded their gold and silver reserves. When ordinary American citizens heard about this situation, they panicked and tried to withdraw their money from the banks as gold or silver coins. But the bankers either offered them worthless paper money or else turned them away. Soon the banks shut down. People lost their life-savings, businesses failed, unemployment soared, and soon the entire American economy collapsed.

President Van Buren was blamed for not fixing the nation's money problems. And in the election of 1840, Van Buren, a Democrat, was defeated in a landslide by William Henry Harrison, a member of the Whig Party—a political party originally formed to oppose Andrew Jackson. However, in April of 1841, after only one month in office, Harrison, the ninth U.S. President, died of pneumonia; and, as specified by law, his Vice-President, John Tyler, automatically became the tenth President of the United States.

The Pre-Emption Act, 1841

The year John Tyler took over as President, 1841, Congress passed a law called the Pre-Emption Act that had a very powerful effect upon opening up the American West to settlement. Before this law was passed, people known as squatters would often settle on government land without actually buying it. They would cut down trees and burn the stumps to clear the land for farming. Then they would build a cabin and move in with their belongings, even though they didn't really own the land. Squatters were quite commonplace back in the early 1840s, but so were the land speculators, called claim-jumpers. Claim-jumpers would team up with lawyers and take the squatters' land away from them and resell it for big profits. In that way, the claim-jumpers could get rich from all the work the squatters had put into the land and buildings.

The Pre-Emption Act of 1841 gave the squatters the right to purchase up to 160 acres of the land upon which they had settled for a mere \$1.25 per acre before the claim-jumpers could buy it out from under them. This law set the stage for the very important Homestead Act, passed 21 years later, that offered 160 acres of free land to people willing to make improvements and live upon it for five years. As a result of these laws, millions of acres of land passed from the federal government into private hands. And hundreds of thousands of new farms were established.

Many of the farms were established by under-privileged European immigrants who, after 1840, had begun to pour into the United States. As can be seen from this bar graph, about 1,800,000 immigrants came to the U.S.A. during the 1840s, a figure more than double the 700,000 that arrived during the previous two decades. By the time the Pre-Emption Act finally expired in 1891, nearly 13 million more people had immigrated to the United States, and most of them had come because of the availability of free or inexpensive land.

California Pioneers and Sutter's Fort, 1841

In 1841, as the first big surge of new immigrants from Europe began to arrive on America's east coast, far away on the west coast, the first group of American pioneers reached California by covered wagon. Back then, California, like Texas, was still part of Mexico. The Mexican government had started to break up the vast lands of the old Spanish missions and open them up for settlement. In many cases, the mission buildings were sold off and their churches were abandoned.

At that time, California's Russian fur trading and farming colony of Fort Ross, founded back in 1812, had pretty much been abandoned. Much of what the departing Russian colonists didn't want to keep was sold to an enterprising Swiss immigrant named John Augustus Sutter, a man who had just received a 50,000 acre land grant from the Mexican government. In the wide, fertile valley to the east of Fort Ross, Sutter was constructing a collection of buildings behind a high wall of adobe brick. His new outpost, called Sutter's Fort, was mainly intended as a way to make money by serving the needs of the growing number of pioneers coming to California. For example, it had workshops, sleeping quarters, various storerooms, and even a distillery for making whiskey.

In the 1840s, Sutter's Fort was the western terminal for the wagon trains arriving from the east and it was because of this fort that the city of Sacramento, the present-day capital of California, came to be founded nearby.

The Oregon Trail, 1843

In 1843, the third year of John Tyler's presidency, the land directly north of Mexican California was called the Oregon Country. This was a vast, sparsely populated region that stretched from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and extended as far as the southern border of Russian Alaska. At that time, the Oregon Country was still under the joint control of Great Britain and the United States. Back then, Britain dominated the region and maintained a huge fur-trading outpost

there called Fort Vancouver on the banks of the Columbia River. Their outpost, which was regularly visited by trading ships, was operated by the powerful Hudson's Bay Company of London. But British dominance of the region was about to end. For just to the south of Fort Vancouver lay the fertile valley of the Willamette River, where tiny groups of whites had started to settle and where many others would soon follow.

1843 was the year an American missionary led a "Great Migration" of a thousand pioneers in a wagon train west from Independence, Missouri, to the Oregon Country, along what came to be called the Oregon Trail. The Oregon Trail was a rough, rutted track about 2,000 miles, or 3,200 kilometers, long, the longest of the great overland routes used in the westward expansion of the United States. Crossing it required making a difficult journey of six months. Most pioneers traveled in covered wagons, but some walked, or even pushed wheelbarrows full of their belongings.

Back in the 1840s, the pioneers referred to most of the land they passed over on the Oregon Trail as the Great American Desert, because they did not think that such dry, barren land could ever be farmed.

Over the years, the Oregon Trail came to be dotted with forts. The biggest one was Fort Laramie in today's state of Wyoming. Here, the pioneers could rest up in safety and even obtain many needed supplies at the fort's store before they continued on with their long journey west. Not far from Fort Laramie, it is still possible to see where the pioneers carved their names in the rocks as a lasting reminder that they had passed by.

In the present-day state of Idaho, the Oregon Trail branched. The southern branch, called the California Trail, ended at Sutter's Fort in Sacramento. The northern branch continued on toward Fort Vancouver. When the pioneers on the Oregon Trail finally reached the deep, rocky gorge of the Columbia River, they knew they were close to their goal. Here their wagons were

often placed on rafts and floated down to Fort Vancouver. And from there, the rich land of the Willamette Valley was just a short distance away.

Manifest Destiny, 1845

The very first pioneers that crossed the Oregon Trail ended up settling on land that did not belong to the United States. In fact, when John Tyler's Presidency came to a close in early 1845, the nation was quite a bit smaller than it is today. Up north, it ended at the Oregon Country, and down south along the border of the Republic of Texas.

Americans wanted the vast lands that lay to the west, and later that year, a writer coined the term "Manifest Destiny" to explain why. The concept of "Manifest Destiny" was based on three beliefs: first, that the nation needed more land for its rapidly growing population; second, that Americans could bring economic growth and democracy to places where they had never existed before; and third, that American territorial expansion was blessed by God because it was morally right.

Just before the term "Manifest Destiny" was first used, a new U.S. President, James K. Polk was inaugurated. And, amazingly, between that time in 1845, and when his term in office ended in 1849, the American nation had reached the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

Video Quiz

1. True or False? The Panic of 1837 resulted from increased taxation.
2. True or False? William H. Harrison was President for only a month.
3. True or False? Most American paper money became worthless in the 1830s.
4. True or False? When John Tyler was President, California belonged to Spain.
5. True or False? The Pre-Emption Act was intended to promote land speculation.

