

Westward Expansion

Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

Betsy Hedberg, Writer

Dr. Aaron Willis, Project Editor
Kerry Gordonson, Editor
Christina Trejo, Editorial Assistant
Justin Coffey, Editorial Assistant

Social Studies School Service
10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802
Culver City, CA 90232

<http://socialstudies.com>
access@socialstudies.com

(800) 421-4246

© 2006 Social Studies School Service

10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802
Culver City, CA 90232
United States of America

(310) 839-2436
(800) 421-4246

Fax: (800) 944-5432
Fax: (310) 839-2249

<http://socialstudies.com>
access@socialstudies.com

Permission is granted to reproduce individual worksheets for classroom use only.
Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 1-56004-272-9

Product Code: ZP315

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	iv
Lecture Notes	S1
Student Handouts	H1
<u>Culminating Activities</u>	
Image Analysis Worksheet	1
Contextual Analysis Worksheet	3

Introduction

Primary sources are the building blocks of history. Using these sources to introduce students to historical periods offers students the opportunity to become historians themselves—to analyze the evidence, form hypotheses, and learn how to support arguments based on evidence. They learn what it means to interpret the past in ways that provide meaning for the present. Textual primary sources can often be difficult for students to engage with because they are often couched in unfamiliar language from a different historical era. Visual primary sources can prove more appealing and accessible to students, and they also involve different types of “reading” skills.

How to Use This Product

This PowerPoint® presentation is designed to walk students through the process of primary source interpretation. Slides help to focus students’ attention and train them how to “read” visual primary sources. Targeted questions and enlarged insets from images help to train students to see deeper into the historical record, to uncover evidence that, though plainly before their eyes, is not always obvious at first glance.

The posters provide visual reinforcement for the images analyzed in the presentation. Use them before or after the PowerPoint® analysis for either pre- or post-reading activities. In addition, we have provided extra images on each disc so that once the students are trained in the skills of analyzing visual primary sources they can further hone their skills. You can print them out and distribute as handouts for in-class or independent study, or you can import the images into PowerPoint® for students to analyze individually or with the class as a whole.

Let Us Know What You Think

At Social Studies School Service, we always strive to provide the best supplemental curriculum materials at a superior value. If you have feedback that could help us improve this product, requests for other titles in this series, or stories of how it has helped your students, please let us know. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
Chief Education Officer
Social Studies School Service

Westward Expansion



Social Studies School Service: www.socialstudies.com

Although people had begun to move westward almost from the beginnings of European settlement in America, the era of westward expansion began in earnest in the mid-19th century. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States and opened a vast new territory for settlement. The Lewis and Clark expedition explored this territory in 1804 and 1805, and other explorers and fur traders continued to gather information about the West during the first half of the century. Beginning in the 1840s, pioneers set out on the Oregon Trail hoping to build new lives on the Great Plains, in the mountains, or in Oregon Territory. Over the next few decades, thousands of settlers headed west in search of farmland and gold and other minerals. In the process, the new arrivals interrupted the lifestyles and livelihoods of Native Americans and changed the Western landscape forever.

Table of Contents



- Manifest Destiny



- The Gold Rush



- Frontier Life



- Native Americans



- The Myth of the West

This presentation will discuss these aspects of westward expansion.

Manifest Destiny

- Expansion to the Pacific
- Seen as obvious and inevitable
- Not necessarily a religious idea
- Spread of democracy and European-American lifestyle
- Exterminate or convert Native Americans
- Tame the western landscape

3

Social Studies School Service: www.socialstudies.com

“Manifest Destiny” was the popular 19th-century notion that the United States would—and should—inevitably expand westward all the way to the Pacific Ocean. “Manifest” means obvious, and its use here implied that there was no question such expansion should occur. “Destiny” indicated that many Americans believed westward expansion was inevitable—and right. Those of a more religious character saw this destiny as ordained by God; however, the less pious also believed in Manifest Destiny, seeing it as a sign of the “greatness” of the American people.

The concept of Manifest Destiny included not only geographic expansion but also the spread of American-style democracy and the European-American belief system across the continent. In order for this to happen, European-Americans would have to subdue and either exterminate Native American populations or convert them to the European-American way of life. The course of Manifest Destiny would also require the “taming” of the Western landscape so that settlers could grow crops and continue the lifestyles they had become accustomed to “back East.”



Manifest Destiny

4

Social Studies School Service: www.socialstudies.com

Give students approximately one minute to view the painting, then proceed to the following slides.

Analyzing Visual Primary Sources



- What do you think the woman in this picture represents?
- What is she doing?

5

Social Studies School Service: www.socialstudies.com

The woman represents Manifest Destiny. She is leading pioneers and railroads westward toward the frontier, away from what's probably meant to be the Mississippi River. As she floats through the air she strings telegraph wires. Her flowing white robes, long hair, and the light radiating around her head give her the appearance of angel leading the country to its destiny. She's holding a book; it's most likely a schoolbook and probably is meant to represent the bringing of education to the frontier.

Analyzing Visual Primary Sources



What are these people doing, and why do you think they are in the picture?

6

Social Studies School Service: www.socialstudies.com

These men are plowing a field. Converting “unused” land to farmland symbolized progress for many Americans in the 19th century. As pioneers moved farther west, they continued to plow new land—even as it became more rugged, arid, and difficult to farm. The men in this picture do not look like they're having a difficult time with their plowing; it is an idealized image of what it was like to start a farm on the frontier.