



BLACK ROCK DESERT
HIGH ROCK CANYON
EMIGRANT TRAILS



NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

Key Players in Westward Expansion

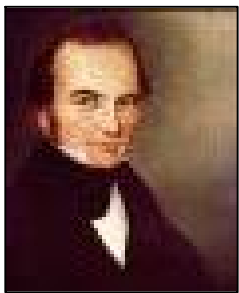
Thomas Jefferson



In 1803 President Thomas Jefferson closed on a \$15 million real estate deal, called the Louisiana Purchase, with French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. “The Louisiana Purchase has been described as the greatest real estate deal in history. In 1803 the United States paid France \$15 million for the Louisiana Territory - 828,000 square miles of land west of the Mississippi River. The lands acquired stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border. Thirteen states were carved from the Louisiana Territory. The Louisiana Purchase nearly doubled the size of the United States, making it one of the largest nations in the world (1).” The expanse provided Easterners with room to grow, and “it quickly became a great source of national pride (2).” Jefferson considered the buy to be a defensive strategy as well.

The United States had secured for Spain the "right of deposit" -- to store goods temporarily in New Orleans for shipment elsewhere. But after secret negotiations, Spain agreed to give Louisiana to France. Spain also suspended the right of deposit. Concerned that the aggressive Napoleon might use New Orleans as a front for an invasion, Jefferson negotiated the purchase of the territory.

Stephan Austin



In 1821, Mexico won independence for itself from Spain. In order to encourage development of the scarcely populated region, the Mexican government offered land grants to anyone willing to live on the land. In return, settlers promised to obey Mexican law and observe Roman Catholicism. Moses Austin, father of Stephan Austin, was one of the first Americans to receive a land grant. Austin’s plan was to establish a colony in Texas; however, he died before the dream came to fruition. Stephan Austin undertook the task of leading 300 families to the banks of the Brazos River where each family received about 200 acres of fertile farmland and more than 4,000 acres of range land. The colony thrived under Austin’s leadership. Soon, many thousands of Americans flowed into the territory, attracted by the rich farm soil and the generous land grant policy of the Mexican government. Some settlers brought slaves and started up cotton plantations. By 1830, the number of Americans living in Texas greatly outnumbered Mexicans, a fact that deeply concerned Mexican authorities. In an attempt to curtail American influence in Texas, Mexico closed the border to immigration from the United States, imposed taxes on the importation of American goods, and restated that slavery on Mexican lands was prohibited. The Mexican government then sent troops into the Texas province to enforce its laws.

Information obtained from:

1. National Archives and Records Administration, http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/american_originals/loupurch.html.
2. New Perspectives on the West, http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/i_r/lewis.htm.





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Meriwether Lewis



Lewis was the official leader of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Lewis was born to a Virginia planter family in 1774. His father (a veteran of the America Revolution), died when Lewis was five years old, and for a brief time he lived in Georgia when his mother moved there with her second husband.

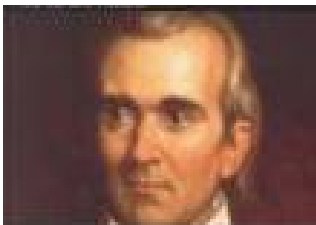
Lewis briefly managed his family's Virginia plantation, and then joined the state militia in 1794 to help put down the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania. Lewis' military career continued as he served on the frontier of Ohio and Tennessee. By 1801, Lewis had risen to the rank of captain. This same year, Lewis accepted a position as Thomas Jefferson's personal secretary. Jefferson had proposed an expedition of the west in 1792, and Lewis was one of the first volunteers. Between 1801 and the appropriation of funds for the expedition in 1803, Lewis studied with members of the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania and gathered information about his proposed route.

Andrew Jackson



“Andrew Jackson was President of the United States from 1829 to 1837, and thus oversaw much of the nation's expansion. Jackson's most prominent role in westward expansion was his continuing struggle to eject the Indians East of the Mississippi from their lands to free up land for American settlers. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 granted Jackson the funding and authority to accomplish this goal, which he pursued determinedly throughout his presidency (1).”

James K. Polk



“Polk served as President of the United States from 1845 to 1849. He oversaw the annexation of Oregon and of Texas, and is credited with beginning the Mexican War in earnest. Polk was a firm believer in expansion and pursued his goals with vigor. However, many northerners saw him as an agent of southern will, expanding the nation as part of a plan to extend slavery into the West (1).”

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Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna



“Santa Anna, the president of Mexico, organized a mass purge of Mexican liberals from his government in 1834. This accomplished, he began to place restrictions on the governments of the Mexican territories to the North. Fearing tyrannical rule, Stephen F. Austin and other American settlers in Texas sparked the Texas Rebellion to win independence. Santa Anna was captured during the rebellion and forced to sign a treaty giving Texas its independence, and was shortly ousted from the Mexican government (1).”

Sacagawea



Lewis and Clark Fort Mandan Foundation

“In late 1804 Lewis and Clark hired Toussaint Charbonneau as a guide. It's evident from their journals that Charbonneau failed to impress either Lewis or Clark. They did, however, recognize the importance of Charbonneau's wife, Sacagawea, a young Shoshoni Indian woman. They insisted that she and her baby, Jean Baptiste, accompany the group. Not only could Sacagawea provide invaluable help in communicating and dealing with the Shoshoni (she spoke Shoshoni, Minitari, and French), but her presence would make a clear statement to the Indians that the Corps might encounter: The Corps must not be a threat because war

parties do not travel with a woman and child. Sacagawea's place in history transcends Lewis and Clark's journals or Shoshoni oral history. With a baby strapped to her back, this capable teenager--guide, interpreter, negotiator--blazed a trail followed by many modern women.’

‘Sacagawea's expertise in reading the landscape, understanding rivers, finding food, gathering plants, and maintaining a clear head stood out during the expedition. At one point while the Corps was navigating a river, a sudden storm washed numerous items overboard. Sacagawea alone had the presence of mind to retrieve the items--including the now-famous journals of the trip--from the water (2).’

Information obtained from:

1. Westward Expansion 1807-1912, <http://www.sparknotes.com/history/american/westwardexpansion/terms.html>.
2. Women's History Month, <http://www.riverdeep.net/current/2000/03/front.100300.sacagawea.jhtml>

