

**Conflict on the Border
Middle School Education Program**

**Manifest Destiny Mini Tour
Pre Visit Activity**

Understanding Manifest Destiny

"(It is) ..our manifest destiny to over spread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty"
In 1845, these words were written by John O'Sullivan, a democrat leader and editor of the New York newspaper 'The Morning Post'.

What is Manifest Destiny?

O'Sullivan was expressing the long held belief that white Americans had a God-given right to occupy the entire North American continent. It was not a new idea, nor was it historically confined to America. Manifest Destiny as a concept was exercised in 1492 by Christopher Columbus and the Spanish monarchs who initially sanctioned the colonisation (sic) of South America. It was also exercised by the Pilgrim Fathers when they landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620, by the British when they colonised (sic) Australia and India. Indeed, any act of colonisation (sic) and settlement at the expense of another race can be said to be an expression of Manifest Destiny.

Manifest Destiny in 1840s America

Once the concept had been given the name 'Manifest Destiny' it became widely used, appearing in newspapers, debates, paintings and advertisements. It became the leading light for westward expansion.



Throughout the 1840s, westward expansion gained pace. People living in the crowded east were lured west with promises of inexpensive land and open spaces.

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848 prompted thousands to leave their homes in the east and make the journey west to California.

The Homestead Act

In 1841, the government of America passed an act that allowed people to purchase 160 acres of Plains land for a very small price. A further act passed in 1862 divided 2.5 million acres of Plains land into sections or homesteads of 160 acres. People could now claim 160 acres of land. The only requirement on their part was that they paid a small administration charge and built a house and lived on the land for at least 5 years.

Advertising and Paintings

In a bid to encourage people onto the Plains, advertisements told success stories of those who had claimed land under the terms of the Homestead Act and had become successful. Artists painted pictures to encourage people to fulfil Manifest Destiny

Manifest Destiny

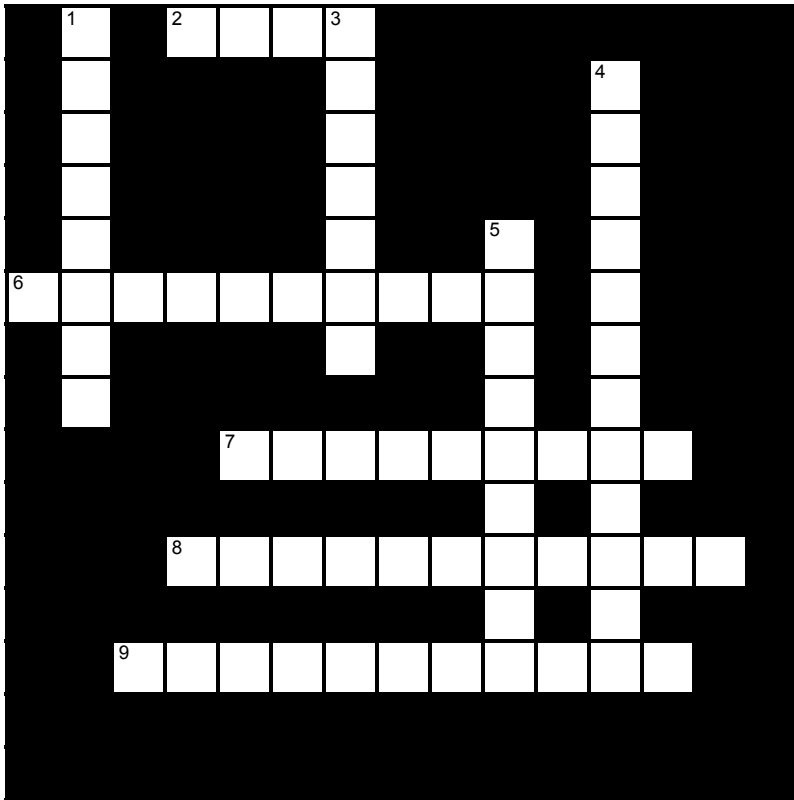
A painting by John Gast 1872



Activity

This picture is entitled 'Manifest Destiny'. Explain how the artist uses the objects and people in the picture to encourage people to fulfil their Manifest Destiny.

Manifest Destiny Crossword



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Across

- 2 Christian name of man who coined the phrase Manifest Destiny (4)
- 6 The discovery of gold in 1848 prompted people to go to this Western state (10)
- 7 This 1862 act offered free land on the Plains (9)
- 8 People were told that land in the west was this (11)
- 9 This was used to encourage people to move west (11)

Down

- 1 Manifest Destiny became the leading light for this expansion (8)
- 3 The expression first appeared in this city's newspaper (3,4)
- 4 Any act of this could be said to be an expression of Manifest Destiny (12)
- 5 These were used to encourage people to fulfil Manifest Destiny (9)

Answers to Crossword

Across

2. John
6. California
7. Homestead
8. Inexpensive
9. Advertising

Down

1. Westward
3. New York
4. Colonization
5. Paintings