

## TIMELINE OF AMERICA'S WESTERN EXPANSION (TRANS-MISSISSIPPI WEST)

- 1803 – Louisiana Purchase, when President Jefferson bought the Louisiana Territory from France for just \$15 million. United States is doubled in size.
- 1804-6 – Lewis and Clark Expedition explores the Louisiana Purchase, but finds there is no feasible water route to the Pacific Ocean.
- 1811-40 – Fur trappers explore/map the Rocky Mountains, paving the way for future trails.
- 1821 – Trade begins between U.S. & Mexico, establishing the **SANTA FE TRAIL** as a trade route.
- 1830 – Indian Removal Act passes in Congress. Thousands of Native Americans are moved from the eastern U.S. to reserves in present-day Nebraska & Kansas.
- 1836 – Republic of Texas declares its independence from Mexico.
- 1836 – First two women (missionary wives) cross the North American continent, proving women (and eventually children) can survive the long, grueling overland trip.
- 1841 – First wagon train crosses from Missouri to California, establishing the **CALIFORNIA TRAIL**.
- 1843 – Large overland migrations begin to Oregon, firmly establishing the **OREGON TRAIL**.
- 1845 – The term “manifest destiny” first used to describe the westward expansion of America.
- 1845 – Texas annexed to the U.S. and becomes a state, setting the stage for the Mexican War.
- 1846 – Brigham Young leads first Mormon followers to Utah, **MORMON TRAIL**, to escape religious persecution.
- 1846 – Oregon Treaty with England, granting the Oregon Territory to the United States.
- 1846-48 – Mexican-American War, from which the U.S. acquires the northern half of Mexico.
- 1848 – Gold is discovered in California, opening the flood gates for massive migrations there.
- 1849 – First wave of fortune seekers (“49ers”) cross the California Trail to the new gold fields.
- 1860 – Pony Express begins to deliver mail across the continent; can relay news in just 10 days.
- 1861 – Telegraph line is completed across the country, making the new Pony Express obsolete.
- 1862 – Pacific Railroad Act passes in Congress, to fund a transcontinental railroad.
- 1862 – Homestead Act passes in Congress, giving free land to settlers who farm and make improvements, sparking a length new wave of westward migration.
- 1869 – Transcontinental Railroad completed, linking eastern U.S. with California and the West.

