

# Westward Expansion

## Learn It — Manifest Destiny

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From 1783 to 1853 the United States expanded from the original thirteen colonies to its current contiguous boundaries of today. Even before the United States became an independent nation, the urge to move westward and find new lands was part of the American spirit. That urge to move westward even played a role in declaring our independence. The British had attempted to stop westward migration after the French and Indian War with the Proclamation of 1763.

What do we call this desire to expand ever westward? By 1845, a newspaper editor, John O'Sullivan, coined the phrase "manifest destiny" to describe this mindset for westward expansion. Manifest destiny refers to a 19th century belief that the United States had the God-given right to expand into and possess the whole of the North American continent.

(Source: U.S. History: [Manifest Destiny](#))

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