

## Westward Expansion

### Lewis & Clark

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase from Napoleon. This piece of land made the United States twice as big as it had been before. Jefferson wanted someone to explore this new land. He chose **Meriwether Lewis and William Clark**. Lewis and Clark wanted to travel all the way to the Pacific Ocean. They were able to cross the Rocky Mountains with the help of **Sacajawea**.



### The Oregon Trail

In the 1840s, thousands of people traveled westward to the farmland that the federal government had given them. This trail was called the Oregon Trail.

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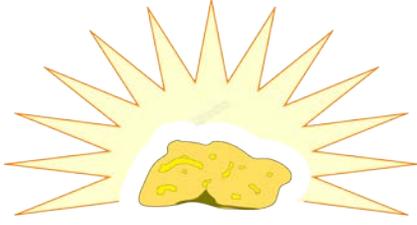
People traveled westward on the Oregon Trail in covered wagons. Sometimes they were called "prairie schooners." Going west was a very hard trip. There were prairie fires, Indians, blizzards, broken wagons, animals that got hurt or died, and illness.



## The Gold Rush

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In 1848, James Marshall found **gold** in a California river. This was the start of the Gold Rush. Many people came to California to find gold. They were called **prospectors**.



## The Homestead Act

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In 1862, the U.S. Government passed the Homestead Act. This gave free land to people who would live in the Great Plains. It was hard to live in the plains. There were no trees to build houses with so the people made **sod houses**. People were far away from their neighbors and got very lonely.



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## The Trans

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It was very hard to travel west by wagon. People wanted a railroad to make the trip faster and easier. In 1862, President Lincoln signed the **Pacific Railroad Bill**. This bill gave money and land to build a railroad line to California. **Immigrants** did much of the work for this railroad. By 1869, the first **transcontinental** railroad was finished. It connected the eastern railroad with California.



