

The background is a painting of a woman in a white, flowing dress, representing the personification of Manifest Destiny. She stands in the center, holding a scroll. The landscape behind her shows a wide river, mountains, and a settlement with wooden houses. In the foreground, there are people on horseback, some on foot, and a dog, suggesting a frontier scene.

**Westward Expansion &  
America's "Manifest  
Destiny"**

# “Manifest Destiny”

**Term first “coined” by newspaper editor, John O’Sullivan in 1845**

*“... the right of 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 and federaltive development of self-government entrusted to us. It is right such as that of the tree to the space of air and the earth suitable for the full expansion of its principle and destiny of growth.”*





# What is Manifest Destiny?

-Concept used in the 1840s to justify the U.S.'

Westward expansion into such areas as Texas, Oregon, and California

-Belief that Americans, the "**chosen people**", had a divinely-inspired mission to spread democracy to the less fortunate (usually meaning natives)

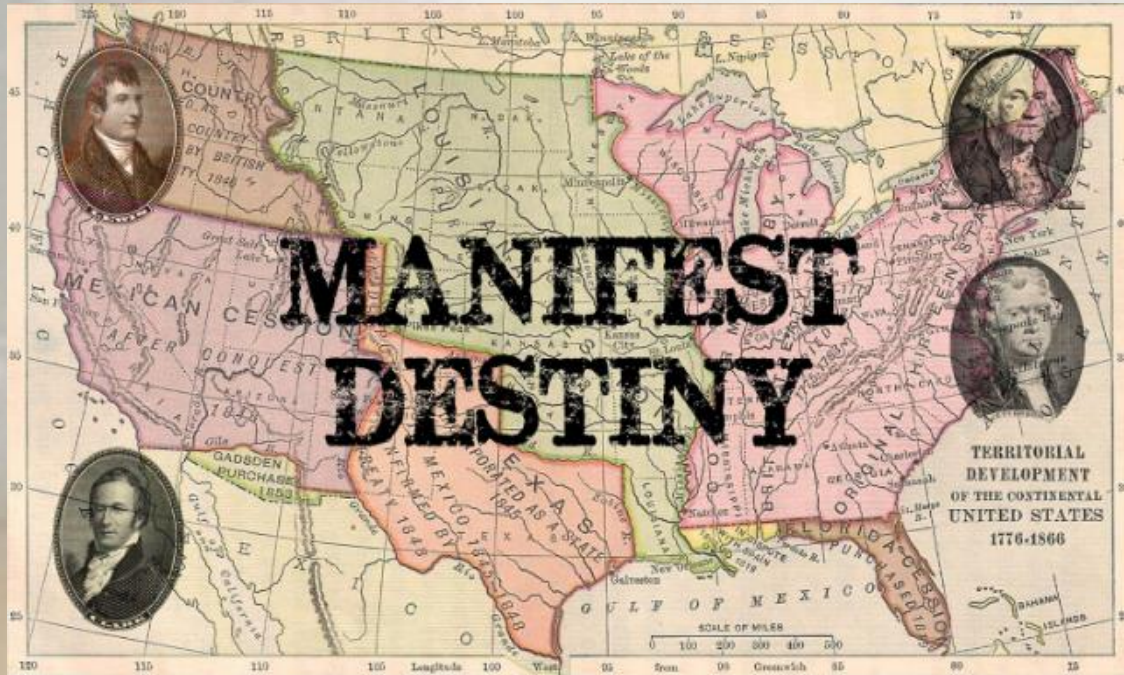
-Term became a common staple in speeches and newspaper articles of the time

-The biggest advocates of expansion were typically Democrats





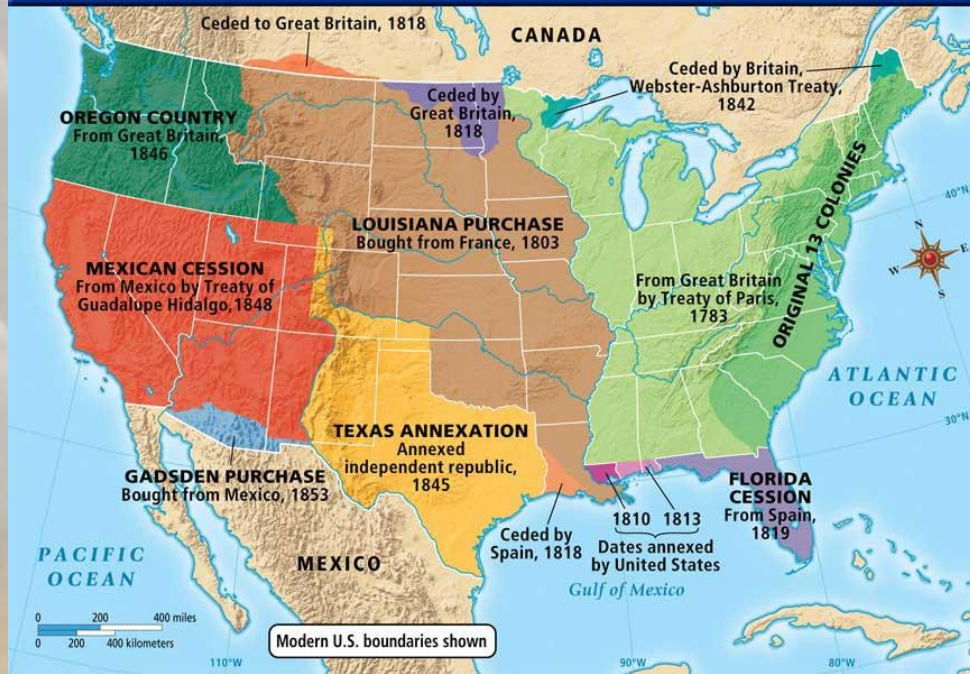
# Motivations for Westward Expansion



1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening encouraged Christian Americans to civilize, educate, and act as missionaries to NAs (and “Wild Westerners”)
2. A need for a direct route to the Pacific & complete access to the Gulf of Mexico
3. The 1<sup>st</sup> Industrial Revolution created a need for natural resources, farms to feed a growing population, and markets to sell manufactured product
4. Cities overpopulate → need to disperse
5. America’s “destiny” to expand westward (M.D.)



## Growth of the United States 1783-1853



6. National security on the coasts, as well as on the northern border with Canada and southern border with Mexico
7. Re-emergence of our “2 party system” and more political democratization → possibility of spreading democracy
8. Increase in American Nationalism and pride
9. Possibility of expanding land OPEN or CLOSED to slavery
10. New states admitted to the U.S.



# Critics of “Manifest Destiny”



- Reject the idea that it is “God's will” (or even a good thing) for the country to expand when it results in warfare and the subjugation and mistreatment of NAs
- Believe expansionists/warhawks used the concept to justify cruel treatment of native peoples and war with other countries



# Critics of “Manifest Destiny”



- Argued M.D. was used to justify wars of expansion
- Believed God would not “destine” a nation to kill and subjugate people
- A small group of Whigs, mostly from the New England states who saw expansion as facilitating the spread of slavery:
  - Manifest Destiny would only increase the tension between a precariously balanced North and South

# Critics of “Manifest Destiny”



- Argued the need to "civilize" the "savages" who occupied the West was blatantly racist
- “Overexpansion” risked spreading the nation's govt, services, and revenue too thin
- Thought M.D. was used to justify imperialism, and that the U.S. would never have tolerated being treated in the same fashion





*Approved*

*Th. Jefferson*

*Oct. 31, 1803.*

-Manifest Destiny's realization through territorial expansion was unconstitutional:

- "Strict constructionists" maintained that the Constitution never expressly gave the country a right to acquire new lands, so the govt did not have the right to acquire territory
  - That view had also been expressed by opponents of the Louisiana Purchase



# American Attitudes Towards the Frontier

## Factors that led to Western Migration:

1. Financial issues left them no other option (Panic of 1837)
2. Many wanted a “fresh start” in life
3. Owning land = prosperity

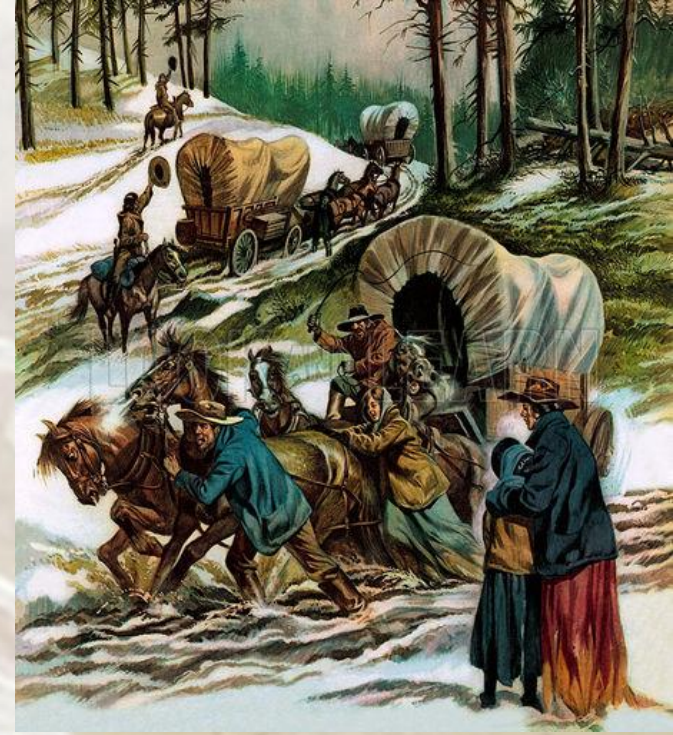


## Who Moved West?

- Farmers
- Miners (seeking gold and other minerals)
- Merchants wanting to sell to new markets



# Negative Consequences of Following Trails West



-Disastrous to the local NA populations:

- Diseases and violence

-Disastrous to many Americans, proving to be a perilous journey for both traders and settlers:

- Died from disease & famine
- Animals lost due to lack of resources, attacks by wild animals, and NA attacks, etc.

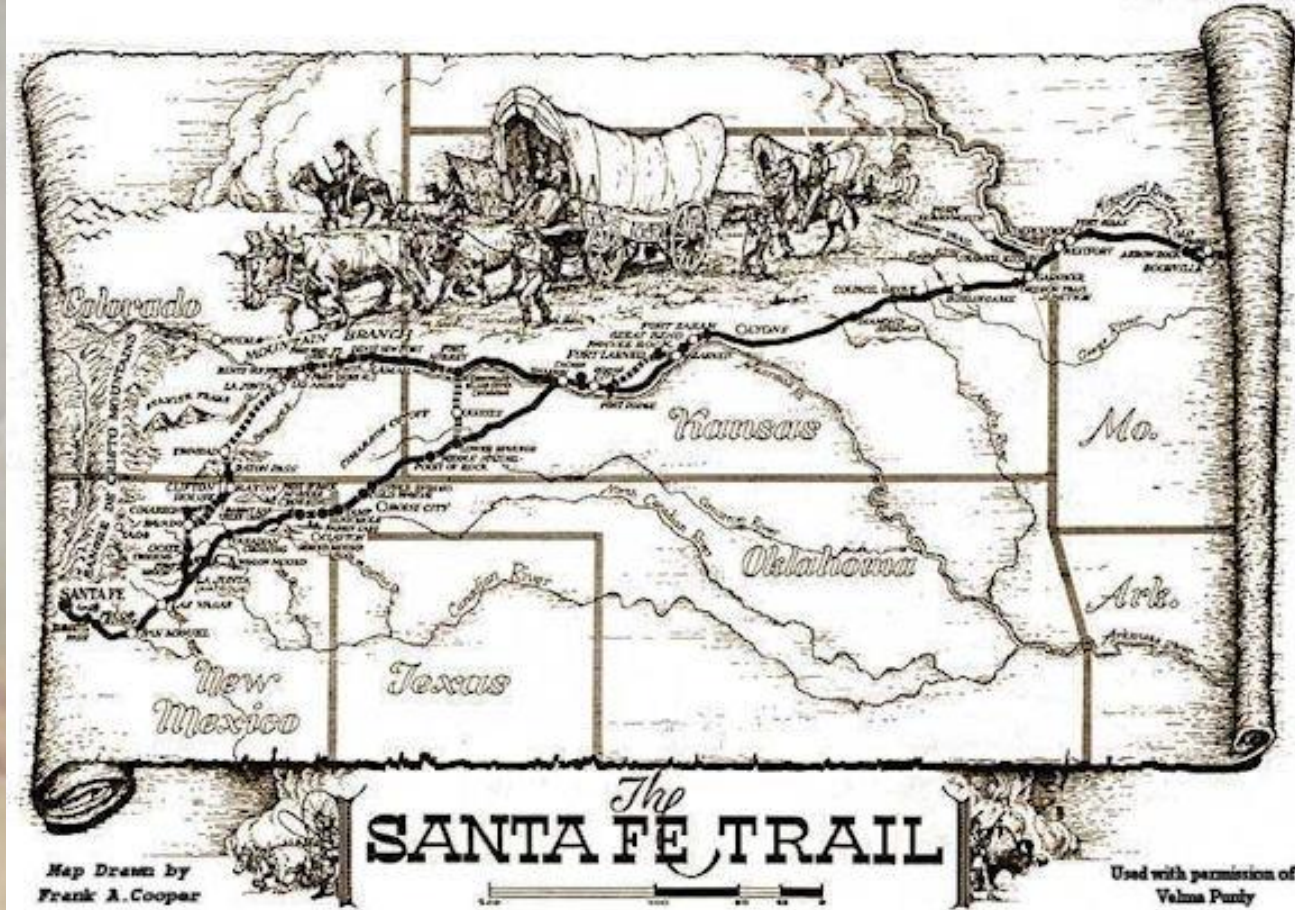




A wagon and oxen cost about \$400, and supplies about \$1,000 (around 30,000 today)

Additionally, settlers needed several hundred dollars of cash on hand for the trip to pay for supplies that had been used up, ferry tolls, replacement oxen or wagon parts, and food for the first winter on the frontier





- One of the most-traveled trails
- 780 miles that led from Independence, Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Each spring between 1821 - 1860s, Missouri traders loaded their covered wagons with cloth, knives, and guns and set off toward Santa Fe



Trouble with NAs prompt traders to:

- Form organized groups with up to 100 wagons
- Have scouts ride ahead to check for danger
- Formed wagons into squares with their wheels interlocked, forming a corral for horses, mules, and oxen



Teamwork ended when Santa Fe was in sight; settlers and traders raced to:

- Enter the Mexican province of New Mexico to:
  - Trade
  - Load their wagons with gold, silver, and furs (they promptly return to the U.S.)

**SIGNIFICANCE: traders established first visible American presence in New Mexico and the Mexican province of Arizona**



# The Oregon Trail

-Started in Independence, Missouri and ended in Portland, Oregon (the Willamette Valley)

-Route followed some of the same paths that Lewis & Clark had followed decades before





# Difficulties on the Oregon Trail

Difficulties faced by many pioneers:

- Many people died from fever, dysentery, and cholera (were buried alongside the trail)
- Psychological effects of isolation and paranoia of being vulnerable to attack





# The Oregon Trail: the Whitmans

Trail originally traveled by  
Christian missionaries

1836: Marcus & Narcissa  
Whitman traveled into the  
Oregon Territory to:

- Set up missionary schools to convert NAs
- Educate NAs

The group established several  
missions as well as Whitman's  
own settlement, Waiilatpu

- Located in the Walla Walla  
Valley, just west of the northern  
end of the Blue Mountains in  
Washington state

- Settlement was within the  
Cayuse and the Nez Percé  
tribes of NAs
- Marcus farmed and provided  
medical care, while Narcissa  
set up a school





The influx of white settlers in the territory brought new diseases to the Indian tribes, including a severe epidemic of measles in 1847:

- The NA's lack of immunity to new diseases and limited health practices led to a high mortality rate, with children dying in high numbers
- The zealous conversion attempts by the Whitmans, as well as the recovery of many white patients, fostered the belief among the NAs that Whitman was causing the death of his Indian patients



- The NA tradition of holding medicine men personally responsible for the patient's recovery eventually resulted in violence
- In what became known as the **Whitman Massacre**, Cayuse tribal members murdered the Whitmans in their home 29 November 1847
- Most of the buildings were also destroyed



# The Donner Party

A group of CA-bound American emigrants caught up in the "westering fever" of the 1840s

After becoming snowbound in the Sierra Nevada in the winter of 1846–1847, some resorted to cannibalism



**James Reed & Wife**



Margaret  
Breen



Patrick  
Breen



John  
Breen

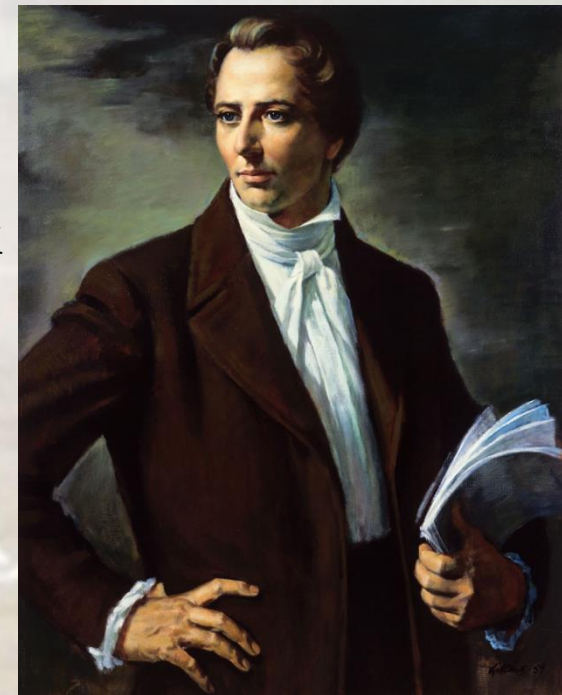
**Of the 83 members of the Donner Party, only 45 survived to get to California**



# The Mormon Trail

The Mormons: a religious community based on Christianity which was founded in western New York by Joseph Smith in 1827

- With his 5 associates, Smith established the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Fayette, NY in (1830)
  - Mormons forced to move West (from Illinois) when angry neighbors protested Mormon belief of polygamy (practice of having more than one spouse)
  - Smith arrested and charged for treason when he broke the printing press of his neighbors who printed stories about their practices
  - Anti-Mormon mob killed Smith and his brother (pictured at right)





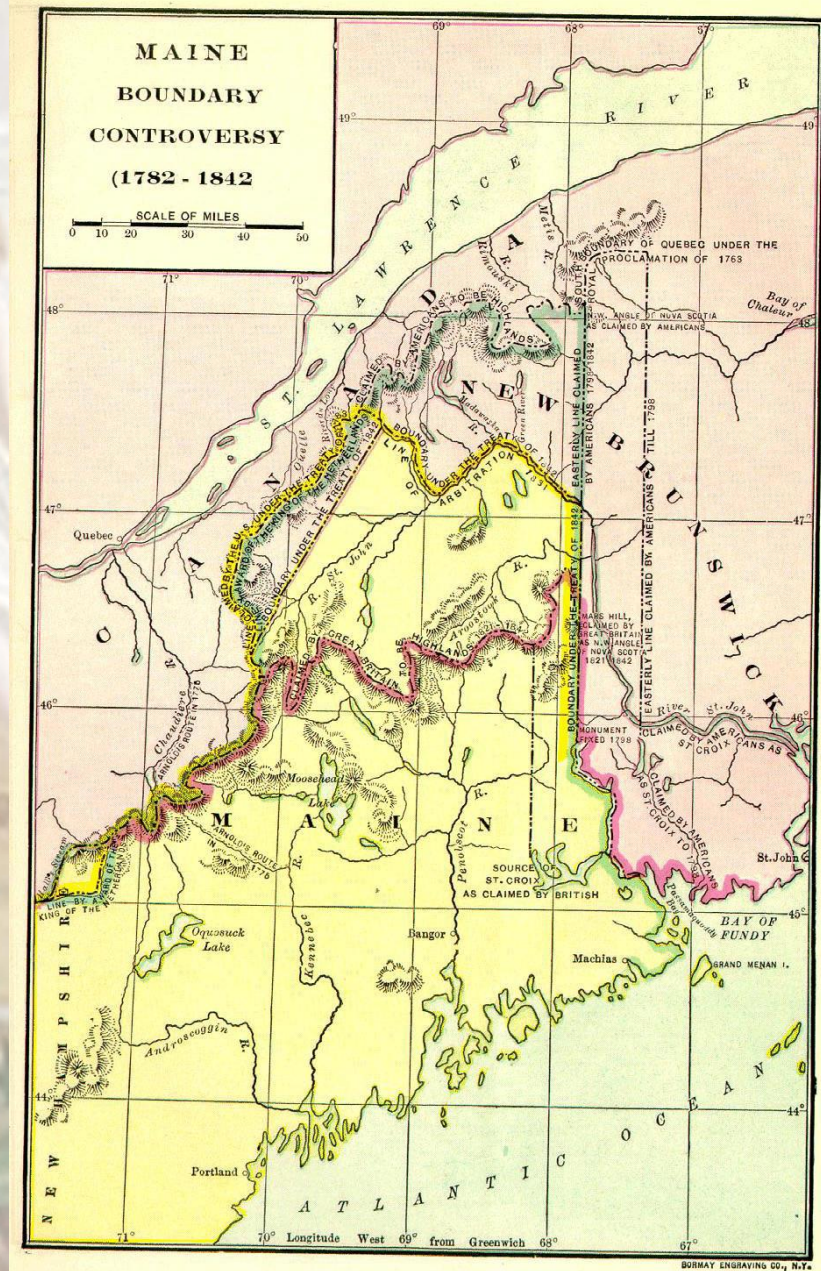
- Smith's successor—Brigham Young led the Mormons West beyond the borders of the U.S.
- Mormons settle near the Great Salt Lake in present day Utah
- Mormon settlement:
  - Families awarded plots of land according to size of family
  - Communal ownership of two critical resources, water, and timberland





# The Aroostook “War” - 1839

- The only war ever declared by a state
- Bloodless war “fought” between the Canadian region of New Brunswick and the state of Maine
- Cause: the expulsion of Canadian lumberjacks in the disputed area of Aroostook by Maine officials
- Congress called up 50,000 men and voted for \$10,000,000 to pay for the “war”
- Gen. Winfield Scott arranged a truce, and a border commission was convened to resolve the issue





# Maine Boundary Settlement, 1842

## THE WEBSTER-ASHBURTON TREATY, 1842



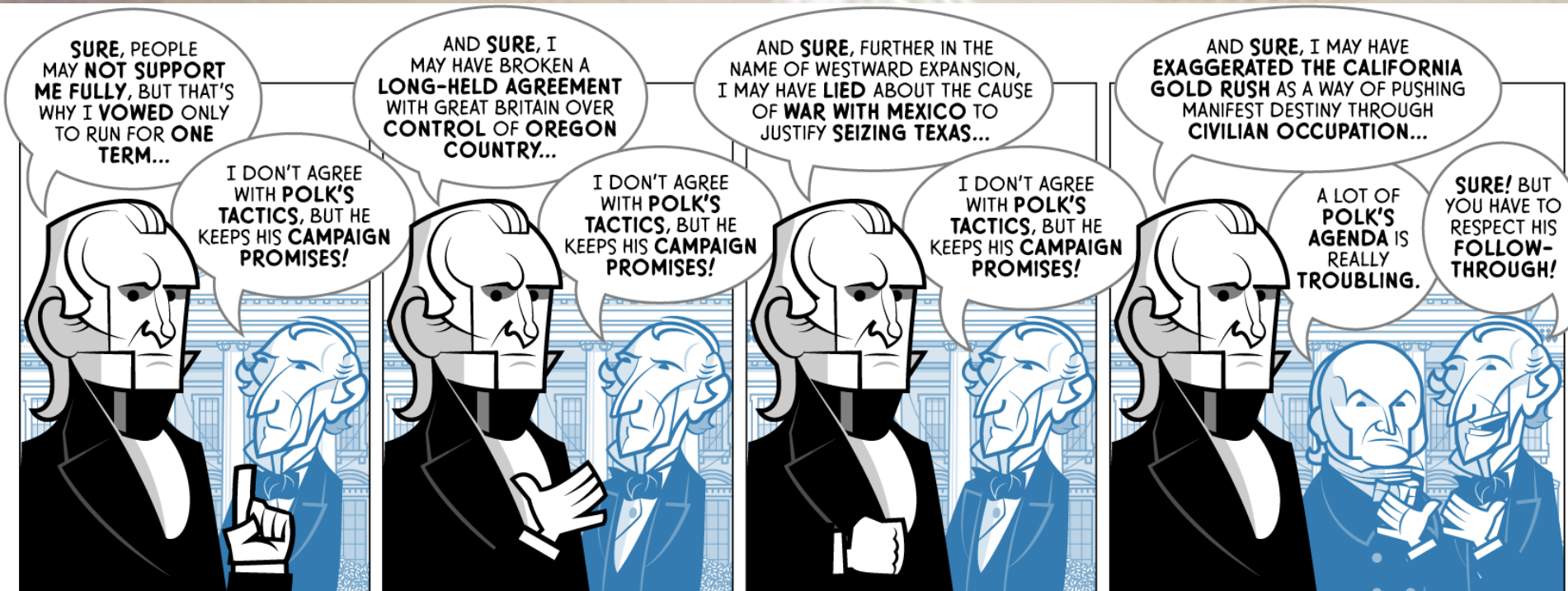
- — Proposed road route
- Webster-Ashburton treaty line

# James K. Polk – “Manifest Destiny President”

-Election of 1844

-Campaign promises:

1. Reduce tariffs
2. “54 40 or Fight” for the Oregon Border
3. Acquire CA and NM from Mexico
4. Restore an independent treasury (Jacksonian belief; a banking system opposite of the BUS; farmer-friendly)





# The Oregon Dispute: “54° 40’ or Fight!”

-By the mid-1840s, “Oregon Fever” was spurred on by the promise of free land

-1844: James K. Polk’s presidential platform called for the annexation of entire Oregon Territory

-Newspaper’s adopt slogan “Fifty-Four Forty or Fight!”

President Polk wanted control of the Oregon Territory and was willing to go to war with Britain. “54°40’ or fight” was his position. The Oregon dispute was settled peacefully on the 49° in the Treaty of Oregon in 1846.



What the U.S. wanted

What the U.S. and Britain agreed on

What Britain wanted

# Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842

-Settled disputes in the East & Midwest over Britain's possession of parts of Maine and Minnesota, but Britain & the U.S. continued to 'jointly occupy' Oregon Territory





**However...things look up  
for Westward  
expansionists:**

- **Mid-1840s: fur trade  
in decline**
- **Great Britain lost  
interest in occupying  
Oregon**
- **Polk's advisors  
deemed land north of  
49<sup>th</sup> latitude  
“unsuitable for  
agriculture” &  
abandon acquiring  
land beyond 49<sup>th</sup>  
parallel**









# Spreading the Word: The Pony Express



## PONY EXPRESS

St. JOSEPH, MISSOURI to CALIFORNIA  
*in 10 days or less.*

**WANTED**

**YOUNG, SKINNY, WIRY FELLOWS**  
not over eighteen. Must be expert  
riders, willing to risk death daily.  
Orphans preferred.  
Wages \$25 per week.

APPLY, **PONY EXPRESS STABLES**  
St. JOSEPH, MISSOURI

## NOTICE.

BY ORDERS FROM THE EAST,

## THE PONY EXPRESS

**WILL be DISCONTINUED.**

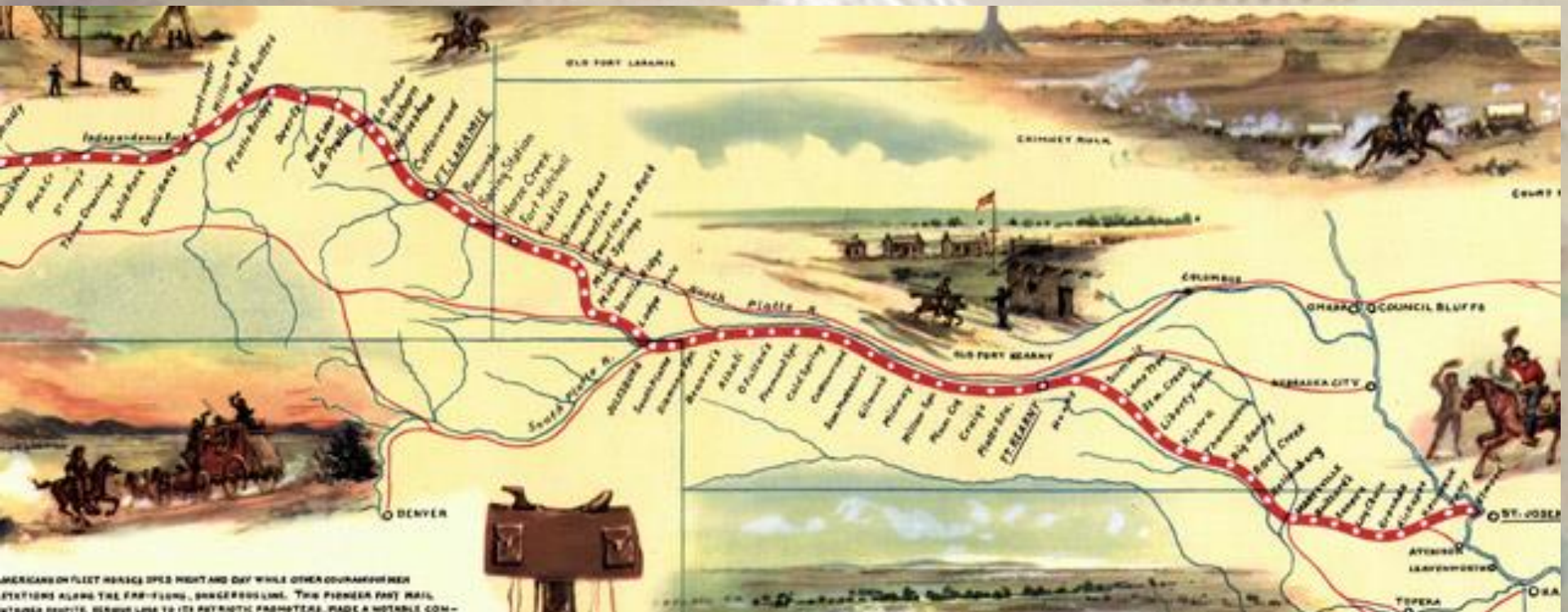
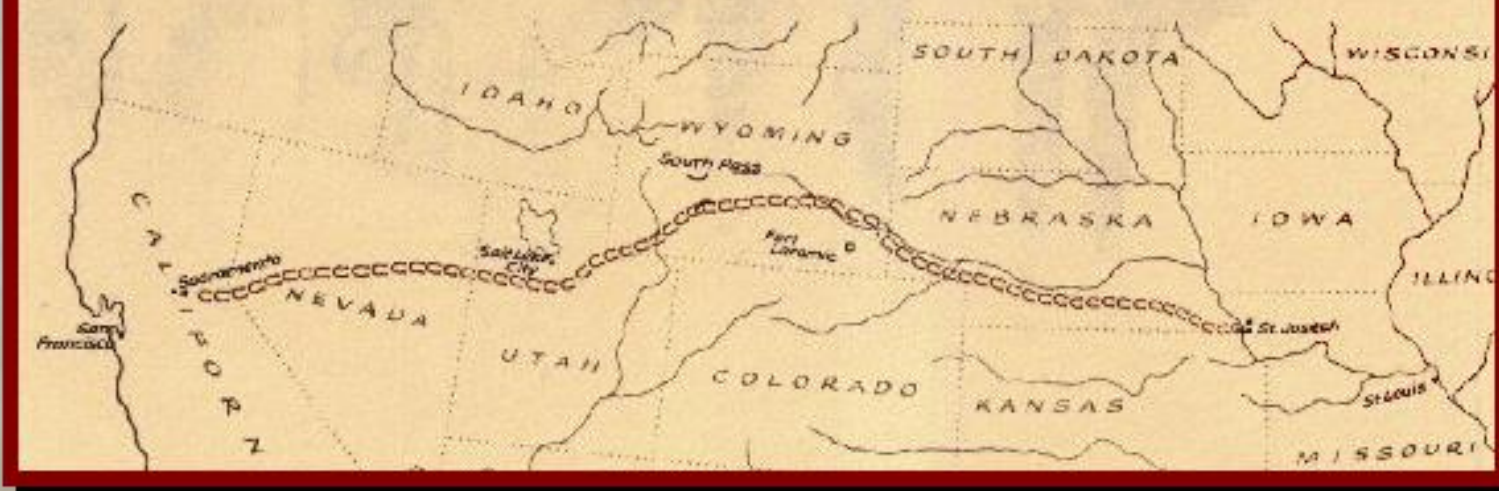
The Last Pony coming this way left At-  
chinson, Kansas, yesterday.

α25-1t **WELLS, FARGO & CO., Agents.**

- Ran from April 1860 - November 1861
- Delivered news and mail between St. Louis, MO and San Francisco, CA
- Took 10 days
- Replaced by the completion of the trans-continental telegraph line



# Pony Express Route — 1860



AMERICANS ON FEET REASSED SPED NIGHT AND DAY WHILE OTHER COURAGERS WERE  
 STATIONS ALONG THE FAN-FLOOR, BRIDGELESS LINE. THE PIONEER POST MAIL  
 WENT AND BEHIND, BECAUSE LONG TO ITS PATRIOTIC PAGES, MADE A NOTABLE COM-