Defining and Settling Louisiana
H1092

Activity Introduction
Hey there, I’d like to welcome you to today’s lesson… Defining and Settling Louisiana! It’s gonna expand your mind for sure!

Video 1 – Introduction
So, before we begin our journey of westward expansion, which was the name of the game in the nineteenth-century United States, you’re gonna have to learn a bit about its history.

First we are going to start with the Louisiana Purchase. Yup, you’re already familiar with the Louisiana Purchase… you know, all that land Thomas Jefferson bought from good ole Napoleon Bonaparte in 1803. Yup! Ding, ding, ding! You guessed it… it was the Louisiana Territory! Now that was a big ol’ chunk o’ land, eh?

Well, as you might already know, Jefferson sent some guys out to the Louisiana Territory to snoop around and see if the land was any good. But I don’t want to ruin it for you, so check out this video, which will explain the defining and exploring of the Louisiana Territory.

Video 1
Once the United States settled its disputes with France, Spain, and Britain over the Louisiana Purchase, the vast area could be explored, mapped, and made ready to take its place in the development of the country. On April 30, 1803, the United States and France signed treaties under which France would sell Louisiana to the United States for $15 million. The U.S. acquired 828,000 square miles of land at 3 cents an acre. With the stroke of a pen, the size of the United States was doubled. Effective October 1, 1804, the United States government split the Louisiana Purchase territory into the Orleans Territory and the District of Louisiana.
The Orleans Territory became the state of Louisiana on April 30, 1812, the 18th state admitted to the Union. The District of Louisiana comprised the rest of the land. It was to be governed by the governor and the judges from the Indiana territory. These officials were to meet twice a year in St. Louis, Missouri. Settlers raised a number of complaints almost immediately, so the district became organized into the Louisiana Territory effective July 4, 1805.

The exact area covered by the purchase was unclear, even after it was organized into territories. The eastern border of the purchase was the Mississippi River, but this was contested by Spain. This dispute was settled by the Adams-Onis Treaty, which required the U.S. to give up its claim on Texas. This concession in turn put the western border in dispute since Spain, and later Mexico, disagreed with the U.S. on how far south and west the territory stretched.

The District of Louisiana was much larger and had even less exact borders than the Orleans Territory. The land purchased was the land of the Mississippi watershed; that is, all the land that drains into the Mississippi River. This designation was based on the explorations of Robert La Salle back in the 1600s. The territory included the entirety of the Mississippi River valley, one of the most fertile river valleys in the world. The Louisiana Territory extended west to the Rocky Mountains, specifically to the continental divide, but south only to Texas and parts of New Mexico. It also included small portions of Canada, an area claimed by Britain. The U.S. gave up its claim to this land in the Anglo-American Convention of 1818, so the Louisiana Purchase included the following regions: all of present-day Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska, most of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, and small parts of New Mexico, Texas, Wyoming, Montana, and Colorado.

Because of the lack of maps and hard facts about the Louisiana Territory, Thomas Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark on their famous expedition to the Pacific. Meriwether Lewis was Jefferson's secretary, and William Clark was a young army officer. They left
St. Louis in the spring of 1804, headed up the Missouri River, then traveled through the Rocky Mountains and down the Columbia River to the Pacific Coast. They saw huge herds of buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope feeding in the boundless pasture of the Great Plains. Their expedition lasted 2½ years and was full of adventure and exploration.

Zebulon Pike also explored the Louisiana territory. He traveled to the headwaters of the Mississippi River in 1805, 1806. The next year he went to southern Colorado. Pike's Peak near Colorado Springs was named in his honor. He reported the Great Plains were not suitable as farmlands, because of the hardness of the soil and the lack of water and timber. Both Pike and the Lewis and Clark expedition encountered many Native Americans on their journeys. Included in this was Sacagawea, a Shoshone woman that acted as guide and translator for Lewis and Clark. They also found trappers and traders in the North, many of whom were supported by the British-Canadian fur trading companies.

Exploring the Louisiana Purchase and defining its borders was a great achievement. Once it was settled, the vast territory helped secure America's future as one of the world's most powerful nations.

**Video 1 – Recap**

Alright, let’s recap real quick. The United States acquired the Louisiana Territory from France in eighteen-oh-three. Then, in eighteen-oh-four, it was split into two territories: The Orleans Territory, which would become the state of Louisiana, and the District of Louisiana, which in eighteen-oh-five was organized into the Louisiana Territory. Wow, I just said Louisiana a lot… and guess what?! I’m going to keep going!

The Louisiana Territory was pretty massive… I mean it included the entire Mississippi River Valley and in addition, it extended west to the Rocky Mountains and south to parts of Texas and New Mexico. Let’s just think about that for a minute… yep, that’s BIG.
So William Clark and Meriwether Lewis famously explored the territory in eighteen-oh-four. Perhaps less famously, Zebulon M. Pike, the man for whom Pike’s Peak is named, also travelled through the territory in eighteen oh five. The land assessments of Louis & Clark and of Pike would affect how Louisiana territory would be settled in years to come. Did you get all that, or do you wanna watch again?

**Reading Passage 1 Introduction**

Alright, even though Jefferson obtained all this land and pretty much doubled the size of the nation, it took a while for people to start moving into the land west of the Mississippi River.

Yup, they were a little reluctant to move into what was being called the ‘Far West.’ However, not everyone was afraid to journey into the mysterious, newly-purchased land beyond, no, no. Brave American traders and trappers ventured into western areas of the Louisiana Territory and even into the very far west Oregon Territory. One American in particular started a fur trading empire out there and, in turn, became very wealthy. His name was John Jacob Astor. Yes indeed, Astor was sooo successful that he became the first ever multi-millionaire in the United States. Want to learn more about venturing into the far west in the early nineteenth century and the success of John Jacob Astor? I thought you might… Well, go on then and read this highly informative passage!

**Reading Passage 2 Introduction**

Alright, so initially most Americans that were interested in farming in the west were reluctant to cross the Mississippi River and create settlements. However, as the lands east of the Mississippi began to fill up around the late eighteen-thirties and eighteen-forties, people began to venture into the far west past the Mississippi. The interesting thing, though, is that most of these people skipped over the portion of land between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains and headed straight for Oregon and California along the Oregon Trail. Why, you ask?! That’s a good question. I mean, why travel so much farther when there was a lot of land in between?!
Well, they weren’t just crazy…they had a pretty good reason as to why they did this. I don’t want to give it away, though, so read the following passage to better understand this strange western settlement phenomenon.

**Video 2 – Introduction**

OK, so it took a while for Americans to move past the Northwest Territory and start to settle in places west of the Mississippi River. And why did they finally do that? Well, Americans experienced big population increases in every decade of the nineteenth century, and the U.S. government actually began to encourage people to head further west.

A couple of the ways they did this was to number one, reduce the price of western lands and number two, to improve US transportation by building more roads and canals. Hmmm, yes, yes… that would begin to lure them out west.

And what else would lure them? You betcha… an important idea called "Manifest Destiny." I could tell you all about the emergence of the Manifest Destiny idea, but I think this video does a pretty good job of explaining it, so I’m going to sit back and let you check it out!

**Video 2**

Americans had been gradually moving westward since the early colonial days. However, that westward movement increased dramatically in the first half of the 19th century. Before 1812, westward migration proceeded slowly. The vast majority of cities on the Eastern seaboard were near the coast. As more and more settlers arrived, people started being pushed inland. Also there were only two roads across the Allegheny Mountains. They were located on the western borders of Virginia and Pennsylvania. However, after 1812, westward expansion happened rapidly. The end of the War of 1812 with the British, as well as victories against Native Americans removed two significant threats from the Louisiana and Northwest territories. This allowed more settlements to develop in those territories. Pioneers moved by the thousands in to the land that was now at least safer to settle in. Many of these territories soon had large
enough populations to become states. Between 1792 and 1860, 19 states were created and added to the Union from these territories.

Settlers soon demanded cheaper land and pressured Congress to pass legislation that would provide it. Because of policies established in 1785 and 1796, the U.S. government would only sale 640 acre blocks of land. In 1800, that number was reduced to 320 acres, but the policy still encouraged the consolidation of land ownership by a small number of speculators and land companies. Truly cheap land did not become available until after the Land Act of 1820. This law allowed farmers to purchase blocks of land that were suitable for a small family. The minimum price per acre also fell from $2.00 an acre to $1.25. In 1796, a farmer had to buy 640 acres for $1,280.00, but in 1820, he could buy 80 acres for just $100.00. So-called wildcat banks in the West began issuing cheap money that was not backed by the Bank of the United States. The availability of cheap money also encouraged the land boom.

Western expansion created a need for and was made easier by improved transportation systems. In 1808, Jefferson’s treasury secretary, Albert Gallatin, proposed spending $20 million on roads and canals. Both state and sectional conflicts, as well as the program’s questionable constitutionality led to the funding of only one turnpike, the National Road. The road eventually connected Cumberland, Maryland, with Vandalia, Illinois. It served as a gateway to the West for pioneers.

Steamboat travel also increased America’s ability to move west. First used in 1811, steamboats revolutionized river travel because they could easily travel upstream. Although the term Manifest Destiny was not used until 1845, the ideas behind it guided American westward expansion, even before the Revolutionary War. Manifest Destiny is the idea that America is meant by God Almighty to stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific, sea to shining sea, if you will. Manifest Destiny exerted a profound affect on the development and settlement of the West. In Oregon Manifest Destiny motivated American settlement and eventual annexation of the territory. Originally the territory
was claimed by both the U.S. and Great Britain. In 1818, both nations signed the accurately named, Anglo American Convention of 1818, to provide joint U.S. and British occupation and governments of the area. During the 1840s, thousands of immigrants from the U.S. followed the Oregon Trail and began living and farming in Oregon. This fueled advocates of Manifest Destiny to argue for the annexation of the whole territory. Their battle cry was 54° 40' or fight. They wanted all of the Oregon territory or were willing to go to war for it.

Ultimately, the U.S. and Britain signed the Oregon Treaty in 1846 and set 49 degrees north as the border between the U.S. and Canada, the site of the current border. Proponents of Manifest Destiny also argued for the annexation of Texas in 1845. And a number even advocated annexing all of Mexico, and while there are still some debates today, many historians believe that President James Polk started the U.S.–Mexico War in order to gain Texas and California because of his firm belief in Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny advocates even felt that Canada would be ultimately part of the United States. The Articles of Confederation had contained a provision for Canada to join the U.S. if it wanted to. Some hard core adherence of Manifest Destiny even tried to incite a rebellion in Canada to force its inclusion in the U.S. That effort failed.

While settlements of the West began slowly, it was made easier by technological improvements, road construction, and a philosophy that treated American westward expansion to the Pacific as inevitable and ordained by God.

**Video 2 – Recap**
Alright, so after the War of eighteen-twelve we saw that westward expansion really began to take off. One of the reasons behind this was that the U.S. government made western lands a lot more affordable with the Land Act of eighteen-twenty. In addition, the government made western settlement more attractive by building more roads and canals.
Now by the eighteen-twenties, steamboat travel made moving westward much easier and I would imagine more fun… I love steamboats!

But let’s talk about Manifest Destiny, which was the idea that God willed the nation to expand across North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Not surprisingly, this had a profound effect on Western settlement.

And finally, by the eighteen-forties, thousands of migrants were crossing the Mississippi River and following the Oregon Trail out to the very far west Oregon Territory…

Make sense, or do you want to watch it again?