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Positive and negative effects of westward expansion

The westward expansion in 19th century relates to the extending foot of whites, in the lands of Native Americans. High profitable land and gold attracted government of United States and forced them to acquire it at any cost. U.S. Government believed that land ownership granted republic and independence. But, today, historians believe that such past acts destroyed the republic. Other important events of westward expansion include Louisiana purchase, the homestead act, and manifest destiny. Below mentioned are some pros and cons of westward expansion.

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF WESTWARD EXPANSION

The westward expansion bestowed prosperity to the United States.

Economic opportunities

Immigrants gained better life and opportunities from expansion. People believed that they could own land and make huge money in the west. The land was cheap and immigrants grew large food crops and earned high profits. In addition, California Gold Rush attracted masses at large and gave jobs in the mining sector. Railroad industry grew at immense pace and provided an efficient form of transportation along with employment.

Economic growth

The westward expansion contributed in huge amount to the economy of United States. Without it, the country would be two-thirds of today's size. Additional states encouraged railroad expansion in the country. Farming, industrial, and manufacturing sectors intensified the [economic growth](#). Large production followed the high demands of goods. This led to the invention of new [technology](#) to fulfill these demands in an effective manner and extended economic growth.

Environmental luxury

New plant discoveries led to the research and advances in medicines. The bunch of new land in America engendered the production of new food crops. Cattle were in high demand and sold for the maximum price. In addition, the abundant grasses provided required food to these cattle.

Favorable government policies

The U.S. government offered free land in large quantity to its citizens. This encouraged people to travel west. Federal government supported farmers by financing agricultural education. Farmers increased their [knowledge](#) and skills in [agriculture](#) and produced new crops on this land. People began to settle and started businesses, allowing the economy to grow and thrive. Government motivated towns expansion and settlements through The Homestead Act. These towns created jobs and provided the superior standard of living to people.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF WESTWARD EXPANSION

The outcomes of westward expansion were, unexpected and dangerous for many.

Native Americans

The impact of westward expansion was huge on native Americans. Native Americans, forcefully, lived on the reservation and faced racism. In addition, military conflicts between whites and native Americans heightened the problems. Such conflicts followed several deaths. Violent confrontation due to distinct culture was common. U.S. Government shut down every demand of native Americans.

Environmental issues

Many cattle herders moved to west in search of water. This led to the mass grazing and water contamination in the region. In the same period, the buffaloes experienced rapid population decline due to growing demand for beef. Hence, it led to the distinction of animal habitats. Also, the discovery of precious metals impacted land and contributed to land degradation. Pleasant farming dreams destroyed many trees. Mining activities didn't follow reforestation and wrecked the landscape. Harsh cold winters proved negative for the settlers.

Slavery

The purchasing of new territories for expansion engendered two categories: free and slave state. During the westward expansion, the Missouri and Maine became a slave and free state, respectively. Slavery and forced labor rose under the greed of mercenary ones. Native Americans forcefully worked under inhumane conditions. Lack of basic necessities followed the introduction of diseases, that ate up many of them. Spreading slavery divided the nation and raised the alarms of war.

Extreme weather conditions

The conditions in the west were harsh. Blizzards, intense winds, and tornadoes often occurred. People bought land and find it unfit for farming. They suffered and died of hunger. Many abandoned their land and moved back to the east coast.

Indebtedness

Farmers had many burdens, that hurt their wallets. They fell into debt due to many reasons including expensive machinery, high taxes, and ridiculous shipping costs. In addition, the railroads increased the price of tickets because farmers needed short trips for transporting` their produce.

The mission of westward expansion was, enriching Americans and their country and the marchers succeeded in achieving it. One can't forget the elimination of lives and ecology, on whose cost America developed itself. American Indians still possess the lingering effects of this historical event's consequences. History constitutes a package of disastrous episodes. It is our duty not to repeat the past and make a harmonious world.

Labels:negative impact westward expansion native americans, What is the positive and negative effects of the westward expansion?, what were the negative effects of westward expansion,

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