

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Grades 5 to 12

Freedom's Irony: Trails of Tears and Manifest Destiny

America's Quest for Freedom Series

Subject Area: Social Studies, US History, Government/Citizenship

Synopsis: Tracing the events of the 1830's, we see how slavery was re-invented by the growth of the cotton industry, dooming generations of African Americans to servitude. At the same time, European Americans began the Western Movement, increasing their own freedoms, often at the expense of those of Native Americans.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students should be able to analyze the ways in which the rapid growth of the cotton industry affected life in the cotton-producing states of the south, as well as exploring theoretical outcomes if the growth of the cotton industry remained steady.
- Objective 2)** Students should be able to summarize the circumstances and effects of the Indian Removal Act.
- Objective 3)** Students should be able to compare the way of life in the 1830's of the Cherokee Republic to that of the United States.
- Objective 4)** Students should be able to give examples of how Andrew Jackson's life and character symbolized the spirit of a "new America."
- Objective 5)** Students should be able to discuss why Texans wanted their own Republic, and the significance of The Alamo.
- Objective 6)** Students should be able to explain the meaning of "Manifest Destiny" and summarize the changes in United States territory and composition of the population as a result of this ideology.
- Objective 7)** Students should be able to discuss the immediate and long-term cause and effect of the Gold Rush on the growth and population of the United States.

Pre-viewing Discussion or Activities:

- 1) Using a United States map (historical and topographical maps, if possible), locate the southern slave states and the Mississippi River. Point out the movement of settlers across the United States from east to west. Trace the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" from Georgia, eastern Tennessee, and the western Carolinas to northeast Oklahoma. Using a world map, trace the slave route from Africa to Brazil or the Caribbean (the Middle Passage) and then to the United States; also show the routes traveled by the immigrants from China, Germany, Sweden, Ireland, etc. to the United States.
- 2) Define: plantation, rebellion, rampage, militia, prophet, migration, immigrant speculation, irony, manifest, and destiny.

- 3) Ask students to talk about how and why they think Americans moved from the colonies to settle what is now United States.

Post-Viewing Discussion:

- 1) In what ways did the great and rapid growth of the cotton industry change the way of life in the South's cotton-producing states? How might things have been different if the cotton industry remained as it was?
- 2) Who was Nat Turner? What was the Nat Turner Rebellion? What effect did Nat Turner's Rebellion have on the issue of slavery in the United States? How would you compare Nat Turner to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?; to Rosa Parks?; to another you may suggest?
- 3) What was the "Indian Removal Act"? Why was it put into effect? How did its enactment affect the Cherokee? Why was the forced migration of the Cherokee called the "Trail of Tears"?
- 4) In the film, the Cherokee Republic is referred to as "a creative imitation of what the United States had made of itself." How would you interpret this? Include specific details in your explanation.
- 5) During the exciting times of rapid westward expansion, the country believed in the spirit and freedom of a "new America" to grow and succeed. In what ways does Andrew Jackson's life and character represent the "new America"?
- 6) Why did Texans want to create their own Republic? What was the result? What happened at The Alamo? What is the significance of the rallying cry, "Remember the Alamo"?
- 7) Explain the principle of Manifest Destiny? What new lands became part of the United States and how were the people living on these lands effected as Americans carried out their "destiny"?
- 8) What happened at Sutter's Mill, California? How did this discovery affect many Americans living east of California? Why did so many Chinese immigrate to California? What major restriction was put upon them? What other groups of immigrants came to the United States? Where did they settle? What were some of their jobs as new Americans?

Additional Activities:

- 1) Why is this film entitled "Freedom's Irony: *Trails* of Tears and Manifest Destiny"? (Emphasize plural aspect of "Trails.") How does the concept of irony apply to so many of the relationships we've seen in this film? Discuss the connection between the loss of freedoms by one group of people and the resulting freedoms gained by another.

- 2) Ask students to talk about their ancestors coming to the United States. Have the class generate a list of questions to use when interviewing an older relative to learn the story of how their family came to the United States. Have students conduct their interviews and give written or oral reports on their findings. As an optional activity, use a world map to mark their countries of origin. (Be sure to include your own story!)
- 3) Have students research other conflicts or rebellions throughout history in the United States and worldwide (e.g. Mexico, France, Russia, Hungary, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, China, etc.). Have students develop a list of goals, motives, and/or beliefs central to each these conflicts. Do they see a pattern or thread of common principle between them? Have students discuss their conclusions.

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