

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Wrestling with Western Wilderness: Wicked College Westward Quiz

Scholars synthesize complex geopolitical shifts and social friction through 10 advanced questions regarding 19th-century American hegemony and territorial transition.

1. In his 'Frontier Thesis,' Frederick Jackson Turner argued that the census of 1890 signaled a crisis for American democracy. Which subsequent 20th-century historical school most aggressively challenged Turner's Eurocentric 'process' model by emphasizing 'place' and cultural conflict?

Answer: A) The New Western History (Revisionist School)

New Western Historians like Patricia Nelson Limerick argued that the West was not a 'frontier' that closed, but a 'region' defined by ongoing intersections of race, class, and gender.

2. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo included provisions in Articles VIII and IX that theoretically protected the property rights of Mexican citizens in the newly ceded territories, though these were frequently undermined by the California Land Commission.

Answer: A) True

While the treaty promised to respect land grants, the legal burden of proof placed on Californios often led to the loss of ancestral lands through protracted litigation.

3. The Gadsden Purchase (1853) was primarily motivated by the desire to secure a southern route for a transcontinental railroad. Which specific topographical feature were US surveyors attempting to avoid by acquiring this land from Mexico?

Answer: B) The Rocky Mountains

Politicians sought a southern route that bypassed the steep grades of the Rocky Mountains, allowing for easier construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

4. The 'Report on the Lands of the Arid Region' (1878) challenged the prevailing 'rain follows the plow' myth. Who was the author that proposed the West be settled based on watersheds rather than the rectangular survey system?

Answer: B) John Wesley Powell

Powell accurately argued that the 160-acre homestead was insufficient in the arid West and that political boundaries should align with water scarcity and irrigation needs.

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5. The concept of 'Manifest Destiny,' coined by John O'Sullivan, was universally supported by the Whig Party as a means to spread American republicanism.

Answer: B) False

Many Whigs, including Henry Clay and Abraham Lincoln, opposed rapid expansion due to fears regarding the national debt and the dangerous escalation of the slavery debate.

6. Which 19th-century conflict, often overshadowed by the Civil War, involved the execution of 38 Dakota men in the largest mass execution in U.S. history after a breakdown in the treaty/annuity system?

Answer: B) The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862

Triggered by starvation and failed federal payments, the 1862 conflict in Minnesota ended with Lincoln's authorization of a mass execution in Mankato.

7. Black migrants who left the South for Kansas and the Oklahoma Territory during the late 1870s, seeking a 'New Canaan' away from Jim Crow, were known as _____.

Answer: C) Exodusters

The Exodusters represented a significant voluntary mass migration of African Americans to the West following the end of Reconstruction.

8. The 1823 Supreme Court case Johnson v. M'Intosh established which legal doctrine that continues to influence federal Indian law regarding land ownership?

Answer: A) The Doctrine of Discovery

Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that European 'discovery' gave title to the government, reducing Native American rights to 'mere occupancy' rather than ownership.

9. The Comstock Lode, discovered in 1859, shifted the focus of Western mining from individual placer mining to large-scale industrial corporate enterprises in which territory?

Answer: B) Nevada

The silver rush in Nevada required deep-shaft mining and massive capital investment, fundamentally changing the labor and economic structure of the West.

10. The Foreign Miners' Tax of 1850 in California was primarily used to target and exclude Chinese and Mexican prospectors, reinforcing a racialized hierarchy in the gold fields.

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Answer: A) True

This tax was an early example of using legislative measures to ensure that white American settlers maintained dominance over the economic resources of the West.