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## The Benefits and Opportunities of the Manifest Destiny in the 19th Century in America

In the nineteenth century, many Americans began migrating westward as part of a greater movement, Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny upheld the founding ideal of opportunity, especially through granting farmers free land, compensating Native Americans, and providing jobs for immigrants.

Farmers benefited greatly from Manifest Destiny in terms of opportunity. When the Homestead Act was passed, many of the claimers were ex-soldiers and poor people. The 160 acres generously provided by the government allowed these groups to have a new lease on life. In other words, it granted opportunity to the previously disadvantaged, as they now had arable land to grow crops. Furthermore, African-Americans and interracial families became able to support themselves without fear of being at the whim of a racist employer with these new opportunities, Manifest Destiny truly upheld the founding ideals for farmers.

Native Americans were also able to take advantage of new opportunities presented by Manifest Destiny. Some tribes, like the Makah, found a way to make themselves indispensable to the area, and used that as leverage, successfully obtaining whale permits that allowed them to secure their livelihoods. Others, like the Iroquois, took advantage of the new settlers to trade with Europeans and increase their revenue. But by far, one of the greatest opportunities afforded by Manifest Destiny was the compensation package offered by the U.S. government to Native Americans subjected to the Indian Removal Act, which included monetary payment and free education. As Andrew Jackson expressed, the government was helping the Native Americans by going above and beyond -- even offering financial assistance -- to help with the resettlement, and giving them a chance to start over, rather than waste away like savages as they had done back in the East. This also relates to the free provision of education. Some tribes, like the Navajo, were allowed to attend militaristic boarding schools, while others like the Makah were given an agricultural education. In all, knowledge and money are power, and by assisting the Native Americans. Manifest Destiny truly did open a new world of opportunity.

Manifest Destiny provided opportunity to immigrants, as well. During the nineteenth century, many immigrants from Europe and Asia arrived in the U.S., looking to escape adverse conditions or just seek a better life. Prior to Manifest Destiny, however, the systemic racism of America's employers would have only opened up lowly position almost akin to slavery to the alien immigrants. Yet, Manifest Destiny coincided with this wave of refugees, allowing Chinese immigrants to participate in the Gold Rush and letting both Chinese and Irish work on the

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transcontinental Railroad. In fact, according to the textbook, by 1868 Central Pacific had already hired 10,000 Chinese workers! To the Chinese and several other immigrant groups, Manifest Destiny was a godsend that granted them opportunity to carve out a better life for themselves in the U.S., far from the famine, religious persecution, or societal turbulence of their home country. As such, Manifest Destiny clearly fulfills the founding ideal of granting opportunity for all who need it.

To conclude, Manifest Destiny provided the founding ideal of opportunity by assisting poor or discriminated farmers, going above and beyond to ensure a better life for Native Americans through education and financial aid, and providing jobs to help immigrants escape bad situations. Although Manifest Destiny had its own issues, the fact that it had such a large positive impact on several groups shows that America's growth and prosperity is justified by the founding ideals. Making policy decisions based upon affording greater access to the founding ideals, such as the Homestead Act, which jumpstarted Manifest Destiny, ensure America will never lose sight of its founding mission: to serve as a land of democracy, liberty, rights, equality, and most importantly, democracy.

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