



0. SCENES OF UNSPOILED BEAUTY - Story Preface

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In the summer of 1871, the artist Thomas Moran joined the U.S. Geological Survey of the Territories. Ferdinand V. Hayden headed this scientific exploration of lands along the Yellowstone River in northwestern Wyoming and southeastern Montana. Having an artist with the group helped to stimulate public interest. This image depicts a chromolithograph (by L. Prang & Co.) of Moran's painting, "The Great Blue Spring of the Lower Geyser Basin, Yellowstone."

As pioneers and explorers began to "Go West," the American government, through the U.S. Geological Survey, commissioned a study of the territories. Some of the best artists of the day took part and have left us with incredible scenes of unspoiled beauty.

- The [Tower of Tower Falls](#) at Yellowstone (By Thomas Moran, artist, of L. Prang & Co.)
- [Grand Canyon](#) at Yellowstone (Thomas Moran)
- [Valley of Babbling Waters](#), southern Utah (Thomas Moran)
- [Great Falls](#) of Snake River, Idaho Territory (Thomas Moran)
- [Yellowstone Lake](#) (Thomas Moran)
- [Tower Falls and Sulphur Mountain](#) at Yellowstone (Thomas Moran)
- [Hot Springs of Gardiner's River](#) at Yellowstone (Thomas Moran)
- The [Great Blue Spring](#) of the Lower Geyser Basin at Yellowstone (Thomas Moran)
- [Summit of the Sierras](#), Nevada (Thomas Moran)
- [Musquito Trail](#) in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado (Thomas Moran)
- The [Mountain of the Holy Cross](#) in Colorado (Thomas Moran)
- The [Great Salt Lake](#), Utah (Thomas Moran)

- Lower Yellowstone Range (Thomas Moran)
- Crater of the Castle Geyser (William Henry Jackson)
- 1864 California Sunset Scenery (Albert Bierstadt, artist, of L. Prang & Co.)
- 1863 Rocky Mountains (Albert Bierstadt, artist; James David Smillie, engraver)
- The "Bridal Veil Fall" at Yosemite Valley (F. F. Palmer for Courier & Ives)
- The Rocky Mountains in 1871 (W. Whitteredge, artist; R. Hinshelwood, engraver)
- Great Falls of the Yellow Stone River (William Henry Jackson)
- Camp in Cache Valley, Wasatch Mountains (William Henry Jackson)

Beyond gorgeous landscapes, soaring mountains and the astounding Grand Canyon, "The West" offered a place for people to start a new life. With little regard for existing ownership rights - such as tribal lands belonging to Native Americans - the United States government announced the "Homestead Act."

"Free land," in other words, was there for the taking (as long as an individual met certain requirements). Let's investigate how the system worked.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SCENES-OF-UNSPOILED-BEAUTY-Go-West-U.S.-Westward-Expansion>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SCENES-OF-UNSPOILED-BEAUTY-Go-West-U.S.-Westward-Expansion>

Media Stream

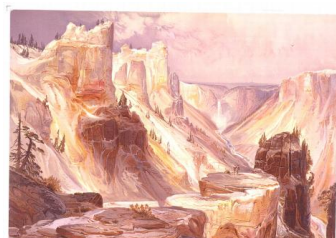


[Tower of Tower Falls - by Thomas Moran](#)

Image online, U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tower-of-Tower-Falls-by-Thomas-Moran>



[Grand Canyon - by Thomas Moran](#)

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Valley of Babbling Waters - by Thomas Moran

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Great Falls - by Thomas Moran

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Yellowstone Lake - by Thomas Moran

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Tower Falls and Sulphur Mountain - by Thomas Moran

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Hot Springs of Gardiner's River - by Thomas Moran

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Great Blue Spring - by Thomas Moran

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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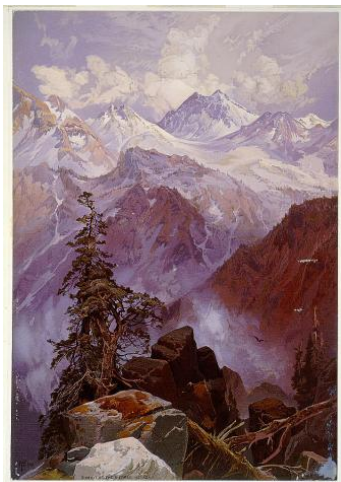
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Musquito Trail - by Thomas Moran

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Summit of the Sierras - by Thomas Moran

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Albert Bierstadt

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

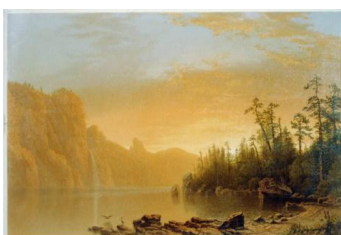
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Bridal Veil Fall - by F.R. Palmer

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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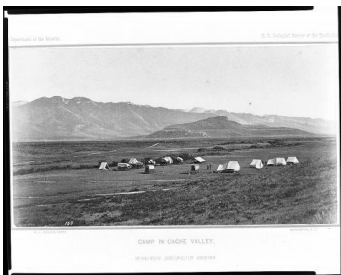


California Sunset - by Albert Bierstadt

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Camp in Cache Valley - by William Henry Jackson

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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Crater of the Castle Geyser - by William Henry Jackson

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Great Falls - by William Henry Jackson

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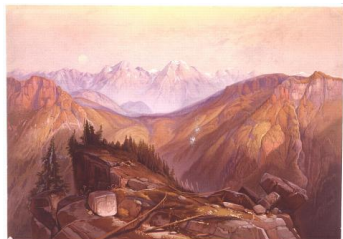
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Great Salt Lake - by Thomas Moran

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Lower Yellowstone Range - by Thomas Moran

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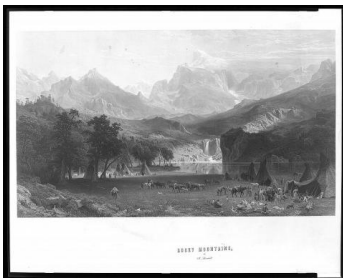


Mountain of the Holy Cross - by Thomas Moran

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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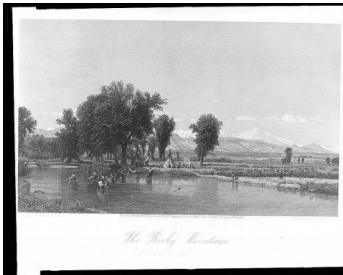


Rocky Mountains - by Albert Bierstadt

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Rocky Mountains - by W. Whitteredge

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