

# Paths Westward

African American contributions to exploration, travel, and settlement

**SS.5.AA.1.5** "Examine the roles and contributions of significant African Americans during westward expansion (e.g., Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, James Beckwourth, Buffalo Soldiers, York [American explorer])."

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK \_\_\_\_\_ Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each person or group name. Circle one action for each, and box words that show how the actions affected western exploration, travel, or settlement.

### People Who Shaped the West

- ① York was an enslaved man owned by William Clark, but he traveled with the Lewis and Clark Expedition from 1804 to 1806. He hunted, carried supplies, and met Native nations with the group. Near the Pacific Ocean, expedition members voted on where to spend the winter. York voted too. His work and participation helped the expedition explore land west of the Mississippi River.
- ② James Beckwourth was a Black fur trader, guide, and explorer. In 1850, he found a pass through the Sierra Nevada mountains that became known as Beckwourth Pass. The route gave some travelers a way to reach California during the Gold Rush. Beckwourth's knowledge of western land helped people move safely across a difficult mountain barrier.
- ③ After the Civil War, Black Army regiments known as Buffalo Soldiers served in the West. They guarded travelers, built roads, and worked at forts. Benjamin "Pap" Singleton also sought new chances in the West. In 1879, he encouraged Black families to leave the South for Kansas, where they could seek land and build communities. These soldiers and settlers shaped western travel and settlement.

**2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Use the passage

**1** What are two ways York helped the expedition? What was one sign that he took part in a group decision?

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**2** How did James Beckwourth's discovery of a mountain pass affect travelers?

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**3** Name two jobs Buffalo Soldiers did in the West. How did these jobs support westward expansion?

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**4** How did Benjamin "Pap" Singleton's work support westward expansion differently from the work of Buffalo Soldiers?

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**3 YOUR TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about two people or groups from the passage. Name both, explain a contribution by each, compare how their contributions supported westward expansion, and state which contribution you think had the wider effect, with a reason.

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**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline each person or group name. Circle one action for each, and box words that show how the actions affected western exploration, travel, or settlement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                                          | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                       |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | What are two ways York helped the expedition? What was one sign that he took part in a group decision?            | <b>York hunted, carried supplies, and met Native nations. He also voted on where the group would spend the winter.</b>                                       |
| 2 | How did James Beckwourth's discovery of a mountain pass affect travelers?                                         | <b>His pass gave some travelers a way to reach California and helped them cross a difficult mountain barrier safely.</b>                                     |
| 3 | Name two jobs Buffalo Soldiers did in the West. How did these jobs support westward expansion?                    | <b>They guarded travelers, built roads, and worked at forts. Their work supported safer travel and western settlement.</b>                                   |
| 4 | How did Benjamin "Pap" Singleton's work support westward expansion differently from the work of Buffalo Soldiers? | <b>Singleton encouraged Black families to move to Kansas for land and communities. Buffalo Soldiers guarded travelers, built roads, and served at forts.</b> |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

York helped the Lewis and Clark Expedition explore unfamiliar land, while Buffalo Soldiers guarded routes and built roads. Both supported westward expansion by making movement through the West easier or safer. I think the Buffalo Soldiers had a wider effect because roads and protected routes could help many travelers. York's work was important because he helped one major expedition succeed.

Accept equivalent details from the passage, including any two accurate York actions and any two Buffalo Soldier jobs. For the museum label, accept a supported opinion about wider influence if the student accurately explains contributions by two people or groups and compares them.