From the first Europeans who set foot on the North American continent, the desire to explore the interior lands has been an essential part of the colonization process. Even though motivations to explore differed—economic, military, and scientific—the goals remained the same: to better understand the landscapes of the New World and expand European populations across those landscapes. French, British, and Dutch colonialists developed a beaver fur trade in the early-to-mid 17th century. The United States government routinely sent teams of soldiers and scientists across the continent, surveying geological formations, water routes, plants, animals, soil types, and precipitation levels. The United States government also built military forts across the continent, establishing a martial presence and developing migrations routes westward.

![Image of The Lewis and Clark Expedition](http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M555606;type=101)

Object: Painting  
Maker: Thomas Mickell Burnham  
Title: *The Lewis and Clark Expedition*  
Date: circa 1850  
Object ID: 92.11.1  
Notes: Oil painting commemorating Captain Meriwether Lewis and Second Lieutenant William Clark and their 1804–1806 expedition from Missouri to the Oregon coast. President Thomas Jefferson commissioned the expedition shortly after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. This painting was completed almost 50 years after the expedition.
“Exploration” in the American West

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M600463;type=101
Object: Painting
Maker: Kim Wiggins
Title: Lewis & Clark Among the Mandan
Date: 2004
Object ID: 2005.24.1
Notes: This oil painting depicts a scene recreating a meeting between Captain Meriwether Lewis and Second Lieutenant William Clark and the Mandan nation. The artist used passages from Lewis’s and Clark’s personal journals. Lewis and Clark are depicted in the foreground, receiving a pipe from Big White, the principal chief of the lower village of the Mandan. Other members of the expedition are included, including Sacagawea and her French-Canadian trader spouse, Toussaint Charbonneau.

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M567386;type=101
Object: Microscope
Date: circa 1800
“Exploration” in the American West

Object ID: 98.128.1
Notes: Field microscope belonging to a European entomologist. An entomologist is someone who studies insects. The microscope includes doublet-type glass lens and adjustable fittings.

Object: Magnifying glass
Date: 1829–1850
Object ID: 87.124.2
Notes: Magnifying glass with Coddington-style lens to enable greater magnification. Typical of those used by naturalists on Federal surveys of the West.

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M520659;type=101
“Exploration” in the American West

[Image of a hunting bag]

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M533037;type=101
Object: Hunting bag
Culture: Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)
Date: circa 1850
Object ID: 97.138.1
Notes: Hunting bag, made from various pieces of leather, fringe, and beadwork.

[Image of a sculpture]

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M579494;type=101
Object: sculpture
Maker: Richard V. Greeves
Title: *Bird Woman*
Date: 2001
Object ID: 2002.4.1
Notes: Life size bronze sculpture portrays the Shoshone woman known as Sacagawea.
“Exploration” in the American West

Object: Armlet
Maker: Narcisse Roy
Date: 1801–1806
Object ID: 90.63.7
Notes: One of the many trade goods made in Montreal for barter with Indians in the fur trade.

Object: Blanket
Maker: Hudson’s Bay Company
Date: circa 1880
Object ID: 2001.19.3
Notes: Beige and black striped wool blanket, designed and manufactured by Hudson's Bay Company. This blanket is twice the size of one that would normally be sold or traded.
“Exploration” in the American West

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=CGAV03-B436;type=106
Object: Book
Author: Cecil B. Hartley
Title: Life of Daniel Boone
Date: 1784
Call Number: ROSENSTOCK 90.253.761

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M642709;type=101
Object Name: Rifle
Date: circa 1807
Object ID: 2012.2.35
“Exploration” in the American West

Object: Scale
Maker: Henry Boker
Date: mid-19th century
Object ID: 85.1.1489
Notes: Hanging scale, which was used to weigh hides and furs.

Object Name: Beaver trap
Date: 1800–1840s
Object ID: 90.96.3
“Exploration” in the American West

Object: Document box
Date: 1800s
Object ID: 90.107.2
Notes: Painted iron document box with attached lid belonging to Colonel Jack Hays.

Object Name: Contract
Maker: North West Company
Title: Voyageur Contract
Date: 1811
Object ID: 2001.23.1
Notes: Canadian fur trade company summer contract for an ordinary, unskilled voyageur to make the trip from Montreal to Fort William.
“Exploration” in the American West

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M545161;type=101
Object Name: Drawing
Maker: Alfred Jacob Miller
Title: Narrow Escape From a Grisly Bear
Date: 1837
Object ID: 92.235.1
Notes: This drawing depicts Scottish lord, Sir William Drummond Stewart, shooting a bear. Sir William arrived in America in 1832 and traveled around the West for eight years; he hired artist Alfred Jacob Miller in 1837 to accompany him during his adventures.

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M513619;type=101
Object: Drawing
Maker: Seth Eastman
Title: Upper Mississippi, near Ft. Snelling
Date: circa 1841–1848
Object ID: 88.108.68
Notes: Sepia drawing featuring a river bend with nearby foliage and Fort Snelling, which is located in present-day Minnesota.
“Exploration” in the American West

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M542287;type=103
Object: Map
Maker: John Melish, J. Vallance, and H.S. Tanner
Title: Map of the United States of America with the Contiguous British and Spanish Possessions
Date: 1820
Object ID: 90.253.282
Notes: John Melish drew this map to show the competing territorial claims between the United States, England, and Spain. The map also includes information from Captain Meriwether Lewis and Second Lieutenant William Clark. This map shows the West in the year Congress passed the Missouri Compromise.

http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=ocm00563061%20;type=106
Object: Book
Author: John Charles Frémont
Title: Map of an exploring expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the year 1842 and to Oregon and North California in the years 1843–44
Imprint: 1845
Object ID: 90.253.312
Notes: A report on an exploration of the country lying between the Missouri River and the Rock Mountains, including a catalogue of plants and geological formations of the areas surveyed.
“Exploration” in the American West

Object: Riding breeches
Date: 1795–1810
Object ID: 91.58.6
Notes: Man's tan leather breeches, featuring a fall front with button closure, an adjustable waist with tie strings at back waistline, and button and tie closures below the knees.

Object: Epaulets
Date: 1830s
Object ID: 88.167.6
Notes: Wool, cotton, and metal epaulets featuring the 1832 United States infantry pattern. Epaulets are decorative shoulder pieces usually featured on military uniforms.