Name _____

AMERICAN PROGRESS

1872. Study the picture, then answer.



John Gast painted this small oil painting in 1872 for George A. Crofutt, a publisher of travel guides to the West. Crofutt had it printed in color and gave the prints free to subscribers of his magazine, Crofutt's Western World. This is one of those prints. He called the floating woman "Progress." He wrote that she carries a school book and strings telegraph wire. East is on the right of the picture, and west is on the left.

◆ LOOK CLOSELY ◆

1. **Who made this picture, and for whom? Is it a photograph of a real scene, or a picture of an idea?**

2. **Compare the two sides of the sky. Which side is bright and which is dark? What does the painter want you to feel about the East and the West?**

3. **Look at the woman. What does she carry, and which way is she moving? What do these things stand for? How does she connect to the idea of Manifest Destiny?**

4. **Find the ways people travel: trains, a stagecoach, a covered wagon and a rider on horseback. Which of these did the railroad replace, and how much faster was the trip west by train? Use the readings.**

5. **Look at the left side, in the dark: Native people, buffalo and a bear move away from Progress. Whose view of westward expansion is left out of this painting? Use the Railroads, Homesteads and the Plains reading.**