

The Homestead Act of 1862

The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed all American citizens or prospective citizens who were over 21 or the head of a household to claim 160 acres of federal land in the West for \$1.25 an acre if they lived on the land and developed it for five years. This act legally opened up the western frontier to settlement and resulted in a land rush. While other acts would be enacted to supplement it, the Homestead Act led the way. The act did not discriminate based on race, gender, social status, religion, or cultural background. The land was truly open for all, allowing women, African Americans, and immigrants their own little slice of freedom and independence.



Primary Source

<https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/homestead.html>

Secondary Source

<https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/abouthomesteadactlaw.htm>