Major Stephen H. Long led a group of soldiers to explore and map the west. He was trained as an engineer. His group of explorers was the first to use a steamboat. He went up the Missouri River into Louisiana Territory. His steamboat was named the Western Engineer.

**Reasons for Exploration**
In the War of 1812 the United States fought with Great Britain. The United States won, but people still were worried. People thought British traders still wanted to take the Louisiana Territory. In 1819 Major Long was put in charge of a group of explorers. At first Long and his men were asked to build a fort in present-day Montana.

In 1820 Major Long was told to change plans. He was to make a map of the plains all the way to the Rocky Mountains. He also was told to search for the beginnings of several rivers. He was told to find the starting points of the Platte, Arkansas, and Red Rivers in the mountains.
Experiences and Observations
Stephen Long traveled through a large part of the central and southern plains. He never went very far into Kansas but he did send some of his men into Kansas. Long was the first explorer to bring artists and scientists along as part of his exploring group. Their leader was Thomas Say, who was a zoologist.

They traveled through Kansas during a very hot summer. The men had to put up with mosquitoes, flies, and rattlesnakes. One time they were so hungry that they cooked a black wolf for dinner.

The group was lucky to meet the Kansa. The Kansa welcomed them to the village and fed them a big meal. Several hundred Kansa came to see the explorers. Thomas Say collected important information about how the native people lived.

Results of Explorations
Long named one mountain in the Rocky Mountains after himself. It is called Long’s Peak. He also measured the height of Pike’s Peak. Some of his men were the first to climb it.

When Long drew a map of his trip, he called the plains "The Great American Desert." This included Kansas. He and explorer Zebulon Pike thought that the plains were not good for American farmers. Their reports influenced politicians in the United States government.

From 1830 until the 1850s the government moved Indians onto this land. They moved eastern tribes to reservations in Kansas. They moved the tribes away from states where Americans were building towns and farms. This was very hard on the Indians. They were forced to live where the land and climate were very different from their homelands.