Manifest Destiny
1820–1848

SECTION 1 The Western Pioneers
SECTION 2 The Hispanic Southwest
SECTION 3 Independence for Texas
SECTION 4 The War With Mexico

Settlers head west in covered wagons, carrying all their belongings with them.

1836
• Texas wins independence from Mexico

1839
• First pedal-propelled bicycle is designed by Kirkpatrick MacMillan of Scotland

1841
• President Harrison becomes first president to die in office

1842
• China cedes Hong Kong to Britain

U.S. PRESIDENTS
Van Buren 1837–1841
W. Harrison 1841
Tyler 1841–1845

U.S. EVENTS

WORLD EVENTS
MAKING CONNECTIONS

Why Did People Migrate West?

Beginning in the 1820s, Americans began moving in large numbers west across the Great Plains. They headed south to Texas and west to Oregon, Utah, and California. By 1848, the United States had taken the Southwest from Mexico and divided Oregon with Great Britain.

- Why do you think Americans wanted to move west in the 1800s?
- How do you think westward migration affected America’s relationship with other countries and native peoples?

Organizing

Create a Four-Door Book Foldable that helps in researching the development of early transportation routes. Record key facts about each route in the Four-Door Book under What, When, Where, and Why.

History ONLINE

Chapter Overview
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In the 1840s, Americans made the grueling trek west to the frontier states of the Midwest and the rich lands of the Oregon Country. The invention of new farming equipment made it easier to clear and cultivate new land, thus encouraging settlement of the Midwest.

### Settling New Lands

**MAIN Idea** Americans moved westward and established new farms in the Midwest; later settlers traveled in wagon trains to the Pacific Coast.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Have you ever packed for a long trip? What things did you take with you? Read on to learn how settlers faced difficult times on the trail west.

In 1800 only around 387,000 white settlers lived west of the Appalachian Mountains. By 1820, that number had grown to more than 2.4 million, and the numbers continued to rise rapidly. By the time the Civil War began, more Americans lived west of the Appalachians than lived in states along the Atlantic Coast.

Some Americans headed west for religious reasons. Others were lured by the chance to own their own farms. While most settled east of the Mississippi River, more than 250,000 Americans continued farther west, across the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains to California and the Pacific Northwest.

In 1845 a magazine editor named John Louis O’Sullivan declared that it was the “manifest destiny” of Americans “to overspread the continent allotted by Providence.” Many Americans believed in this concept of Manifest Destiny—the idea that God had given the entire continent to Americans and wanted them to settle western land.

### Farming the New Lands

Early settlers marked out farms on the rich river bottom land. Others occupied fertile woodlands. These pioneers became known as squatters, because they settled on lands they did not own. The federal government intended to survey the land and then sell large parcels to real estate companies, but squatters wanted to buy the land they occupied directly from the government.

Bowing to public pressure, Congress passed the Preemption Act of 1830, a renewable law made permanent in 1841. This law protected squatters by guaranteeing them the right to claim land before it was surveyed and the right to buy up to 160 acres at the government’s minimum price of $1.25 per acre.
Plows and Reapers

A few decades earlier, farmers had only wooden plows to break the grass cover and roots of Midwestern sod. Jethro Wood patented an iron-bladed plow in 1819, and in 1837 John Deere engineered a plow with sharp-edged steel blades that cut cleanly through the sod. This reduced, by half, the labor needed to prepare an acre for farming.

Midwestern agriculture also received a boost from the mechanical reaper, which Cyrus McCormick patented in 1834. For centuries farmers had cut grain by hand, using a sickle or a scythe—exhausting and time-consuming work. Switching from a sickle to a McCormick reaper pulled by horses or mules, farmers could harvest far more grain with far less effort.

Settling the Pacific Coast

Latecomers to the Midwest set their sights on the Pacific Coast, partly because emigrants assumed that the treeless Great Plains had poor land for farming. The United States and Great Britain—as well as Native Americans—laid claim to Oregon Country, a region that included present-day Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. In 1818 Britain and the United States had agreed to occupy the land jointly. In the 1830s, American missionaries began arriving in Oregon to convert Native Americans. These missionaries spread the word about Oregon and persuaded others to come to the lush Willamette Valley.

 má¥ Reading Check Describing How did Congress help squatters attain land in the West?
Westward Migration

MAIN IDEA Emigrant groups followed specific trails through territory belonging to Native Americans.

HISTORY AND YOU Do you remember which religious groups came to America to escape religious persecution? Read on to learn why the Mormons left the United States to practice their religion freely.

Much of the terrain from the edge of the frontier to the Pacific was difficult. A small number of trailblazers—mountain men like Kit Carson and Jim Bridger—made their living by trapping beaver and selling the furs to traders. At the same time, they gained a thorough knowledge of the territory and the local Native Americans.

By the 1840s, the mountain men had carved out several East-to-West trails that helped settlers travel. The most popular route was the Oregon Trail. Others included the California Trail and the Santa Fe Trail.

Emigrants made the journey in groups of covered wagons called wagon trains. Before starting out, the trains assembled at staging areas outside a frontier town. There, families exchanged information about routes, bought supplies, trained oxen, and practiced steering the cumbersome wagons, which new drivers were apt to tip over.

The first wagon trains hired mountain men to guide them. Once the trails became well worn, most of the travelers—known as overlanders—found their own way with the help of guidebooks. Sometimes the guidebooks were wrong, leading to tragedy. In 1846 a group of 87 overlanders known as the Donner Party, after the two brothers who led them, were trapped by winter snows high up in the Sierra Nevada. After 41 died of starvation, those still alive resorted to cannibalism in order to survive.

Analyzing GEOGRAPHY

1. Location Name three Missouri cities that served as starting points for western emigrants.

2. Regions Why did emigrants bypass the Great Plains and travel all the way to the Far West?

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The typical trip west took five to six months, with the wagon trains progressing about 15 miles (24 km) per day. Generally, men drove the wagons, hunted game, and fed and cared for the animals at night, while women looked after the children, cooked the meals, cleaned the camp, and laundered the clothes. As Elizabeth Geer recounts, the journey was exhausting and difficult:

**Primary Source**

“I carry my babe and lead, or rather carry, another through snow, mud, and water, almost to my knees. It is the worst road...[T]here was not one dry thread on one of us—not even my babe...I have not told you half we suffered. I am not adequate to the task.”

—quoted in *Women’s Diaries of the Westward Journey*

**Native Americans**

Early travelers feared attacks by Native American warriors, but such encounters were rare. By one estimate, only 362 emigrants died due to Native American attacks between 1840 and 1860, while emigrants killed 426 Native Americans in the same period. In fact, Native Americans often gave emigrants gifts of food, as well as helpful information about routes, edible plants, and sources of water. They often traded fresh horses for items such as cotton clothing and ammunition.

As the overland traffic increased, Native Americans on the Great Plains became concerned and angry over the threat this influx of people posed to their way of life. The Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and other groups relied on buffalo for food, shelter, clothing, tools, and countless other necessities of everyday life. Now they feared that the age-old wanderings of the buffalo herds would be disrupted.

Hoping to ensure peace, the federal government negotiated the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851. In that document, the United States promised eight Native American groups that specific territories in the region of the Great Plains would belong to them as long as they allowed settlers to pass through peacefully. The government also agreed to make payments to the groups.

**The Mormon Migration**

Unlike those bound for the West in search of land, the Mormons followed a deeply rooted American tradition—the quest for religious freedom. The Mormons, however, had to seek that freedom by leaving the Eastern states, instead of coming to them.

In 1844, after a mob murdered their leader, Joseph Smith, the church’s new leader, Brigham Young, took his people west to escape further persecution. Several thousand Mormons forged their way along a path that became known as the Mormon Trail. It served as a valuable route into the western United States. In 1847 the Mormons stopped at the Great Salt Lake in what is now Utah. Undeterred by the wildness of the area, they staked a claim on the land they called “Deseret.”

**Vocabulary**

1. Explain the significance of: Manifest Destiny, squatters, Jethro Wood, John Deere, Cyrus McCormick, Kit Carson, overlander.

**Main Ideas**

2. Specifying Who encouraged settlers to emigrate to the Oregon Territory?

3. Describing What was the purpose of the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, and what were its main points?

**Critical Thinking**

4. Big Ideas What two inventions made it easier to farm on the frontier?

5. Organizing Use a graphic organizer, similar to the one below, to list the reasons that Americans emigrated to the West.

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Reasons Americans Went West
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6. Analyzing Visuals Study the map of overland trails to the West on page 256. Where did the Old Spanish Trail begin, and where did it end?

**Writing About History**

7. Descriptive Writing Suppose that you emigrated from the East to a frontier farm in the West. Write a journal entry describing a day in your journey.