The Westward Movement

by Tim Bailey

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ resources, designed to align to the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original source materials of historical significance. Through a step-by-step process, students will acquire the skills to analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned viewpoints on primary source materials.

Over the course of four lessons the students will analyze primary source documents that present examples of the perception and the reality of American westward migration during the 1800s. These documents represent both the romanticism and the cruel realities of this period. Students will closely read and analyze a variety of texts with the purpose of not only understanding the literal but also inferring the more subtle contexts within these documents. Students will use textual evidence to draw their conclusions and present arguments as directed in each lesson. By the completion of the unit, students will participate in a mock debate.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Read, analyze, and be prepared to explain the text of various documents: the lyrics to songs, a personal letter, a poem, and a journal / diary entry
- Identify key text and summarize documents
- Answer critical-thinking questions using evidence from the documents
- Engage in discussions with other students to explain and defend their answers
- Role-play in a mock debate

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

You can use these essential questions to stimulate discussion throughout the unit:

- Why were many people drawn to migrate to the West?
- To what extent did western migration prove to be a serious challenge?
- What were the rewards and dangers associated with migration to the West?

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 4

GRADE LEVELS: 9–12
COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9: Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
LESSON 1

OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will carefully read three short primary sources written to encourage Americans to move west and settle the untamed land. The students will analyze the documents and identify the arguments being made in favor of westward migration. You may choose to have the students do the lesson individually, as partners, or in small groups of no more than 3 or 4 students.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On April 30, 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte of France sold to the United States 885,000 square miles of territory in North America for $15 million. Soon Congress sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to find out just exactly what the United States had purchased. On November 7, 1805, the Lewis and Clark Expedition reached the Pacific Ocean and the way to the West was opened. Fur trappers, traders, and finally pioneer settlers followed.

President James Polk stated that it was America’s “Manifest Destiny” to settle North America from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and the people of America showed their agreement by pushing the borders of the United States across the Mississippi River and ever westward. In 1841 the first group of 69 pioneers left Missouri and headed west, bound for Oregon. From 1841 until the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 more than 350,000 migrants traveled by foot, handcart, and wagon to Oregon and California. At the peak of this westward migration more than 55,000 pioneers made the hazardous crossing in a single season.

MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer: Traveling West

PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the information in the Historical Background, but avoid providing additional details as you want the students learn about the topic through the documents themselves. You may have the students take notes on the information.

2. Hand out “The Lovely Ohio.”
3. “Share read” the song with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while you begin reading aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to serve as the model for the class. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English language learners (ELL).


5. Hand out the Summary Organizer: Traveling West. Students will examine the song and determine which words or phrases are the most important in that text. They will copy those words into the box on the right. After they have determined what is most important, they will summarize the text in their own words.

6. Students can brainstorm as partners or small groups but must finish their own organizer in order to complete the assignment.

7. Repeat this process with the other two documents, the poem “Out Where the West Begins” and Horace Greeley’s letter.

8. Class discussion: What is the central argument being made in all three pieces? Have groups or individual students share their summaries and compare with other groups.
LESSON 2

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, the students will carefully read an excerpt from the journal of a young girl traveling overland with her family to settle in the Oregon Territory in 1844. The students will analyze the document in order to understand some of the difficulties of making that journey. Students will answer a series of critical-thinking questions designed to measure their comprehension of the text. You may choose to have the students do the lesson individually, as partners, or in small groups of no more than 3 or 4 students.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The 2,000-mile journey from Missouri to Oregon was not something to be taken lightly. It was a grueling five- to eight-month ordeal. One in every seventeen travelers died along the way. If graves were evenly spaced along the Oregon Trail’s 2,000-mile length there would be a tombstone every eighty yards to mark the resting place of a pioneer who did not survive the journey.

If the journey was so dangerous, why did they go? Why would pioneers risk their own lives and the lives of their families in order to make this migration? There are many reasons. Among the most common was the promise of something better out West than they could have in the East. In 1843 a trapper who had been to Oregon’s Willamette Valley told a group of prospective emigrants that “the pigs are running around about under the great acorn trees, round and fat, and already cooked, with knives and forks sticking in them so that you can cut off a slice whenever you are hungry.” Popular publications and guide books of the time told of all the virtues of Oregon and California. One of these books reported that “As far as its producing qualities are concerned Oregon cannot be outdone whether in wheat, oats, rye, barley, buckwheat, peas, beans, potatoes, turnips, cabbages, onions, parsnips, carrots, beets, currants, gooseberries, strawberries, apples, peaches, pears, or fat and healthy babies.”

MATERIALS

- Critical-Thinking Questions

PROCEDURE

1. Prior to the lesson, you may want to find primary source visuals of the pioneer migration such as pictures of the land crossed, wagons used, and pioneers.
2. Discuss the information in the Historical Background, but avoid providing additional detail. You may have the students take notes on the information.
3. Hand out the journal excerpt from “On the Plains in 1844.”
4. If you choose, you can share read this as you did the passages in Lesson 1 or have the students read it for themselves.

5. Hand out the Critical-Thinking Questions. Students must use actual quotes from the text as the basis for their answers. Summaries should be complete sentences.

6. Students can brainstorm as partners or small groups but must complete their own worksheet in order to complete the assignment.

7. Class discussion: Have groups or individual students share their answers and compare with other groups. Remind them to use the author’s own words to support their answers.
LESSON 3

OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will demonstrate their understanding of the documents presented over the past two days. They will be preparing a mock debate in which they will role-play prospective pioneers and debate the wisdom of making the journey out West.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Oregon seemed, from all accounts, to be paradise on Earth. All you had to do was get there and claim your little bit of heaven. It was that hope that made it worth the risks of the journey. In addition, the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill in California in 1848 created a huge surge in the number of people choosing to emigrate to the West and try their luck in California.

These factors pulled people to the West while a number of factors pushed people out of the East. The first of these was a series of financial crises, the first in 1837, which brought about a depression and ruined many farmers. In addition, a series of epidemics swept many parts of the eastern United States: typhoid, dysentery, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, malaria, and yellow fever. Perhaps the most devastating of all was cholera, which had arrived from Asia in the 1830s and in 1850 accounted for more than 50,000 deaths in the United States.

Others chose to emigrate to the West for the same reason that many people had come to the Atlantic shores of America two centuries before: religious freedom. The Mormon pioneers, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, left Illinois in 1846 to find a place to practice their religion without fear of persecution and settled in the Salt Lake valley of Utah. Adventurers, missionaries, land speculators, and many others with a variety of reasons followed the reasoning of Henry David Thoreau when he said “Eastward, I go only by force, but westward I go free . . . the prevailing tendency of my countrymen.”

MATERIALS

- “The Lovely Ohio”
- Arthur Chapman, “Out Where the West Begins”
- Letter from Horace Greeley, 1871
- “On the Plains in 1844”
- The Great Western Migration
- Debate Script Form
PROCEDURE

Students should be organized into groups of 3 to 5 students. All of the students should have copies of the materials.

1. Discuss the information in the Historical Background, but avoid providing additional detail. You may have the students take notes on the information.

2. Share read the song “The Wisconsin Emigrant” with the class as described in Lesson 1, and then listen to the song online at http://www.balladofamerica.com/music/indexes/songs/wisconsinemigrant/index.htm.

3. Discuss the song by asking text-based questions: What reasons does the husband give for wanting to move to Wisconsin? What reasons does his wife give for staying? How does he claim that life will be better if they move? What argument does his wife make that finally convinces him to stay?

4. Provide the students with copies of “The Great Western Migration” and inform them that they may use this information along with the other documents previously distributed.

5. Tell the students that they are going to have a mock debate based on the reasons to journey to the West in the 1800s or to stay in the East. They need to choose one person in their group to be a debate moderator and divide the rest of the group evenly into supporters and opponents of western migration.

6. The students will be writing the script for a debate based on the issues raised in the documents they have been studying. This script is to be written as a team effort and everyone in the group will have a copy of the final script. This will not be an actual debate but a short reader’s-theater piece.

7. Provide one question that all groups must address during their debate: What is the best argument supporting your view of western migration? (Make sure to base your answer on evidence from the documents.)

8. The students should add another 2 to 4 relevant questions that can be answered with text from the primary sources. They may use the Debate Script Form to structure their mock debate. Within each group, each side (those in favor of migration and those against it) must respond to each of the questions. If there is time, the group may also write a rebuttal for each side for each of the questions.

9. Remind the students that everyone in the group needs to work on the whole script, not just on their side’s answers, and that the responses need to be taken directly from the texts of the documents used in the lessons.

10. Wrap-up: If students have time, let them rehearse their presentations for the next lesson.
LESSON 4

OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will demonstrate their understanding of the documents presented over the past three days. They will participate in a mock debate in which they will role-play prospective pioneers debating questions concerning the wisdom of making the journey out west.

MATERIALS

- Student-prepared debate scripts and supporting documents from previous lessons

PROCEDURE

1. The groups will present their debates on western migration to the rest of the class.

2. The Moderator should begin the debate by introducing both sides and setting out the protocol for the “debate.” (Actually watching a clip of a debate might be helpful as well.)

3. The Moderator asks each question and directs the opposing sides to answer. Supporters and opponents answer each question. If they have written rebuttals, they can offer them as well.

4. Class discussion: After all the debate presentations are concluded, discuss the best arguments made by the groups and the best text-based evidence used.
The Lovely Ohio

Come all ye brisk young fellows who have a mind to roam
All in some foreign counteree, a long way from home
All in some foreign counteree along with me to go
And we’ll settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio
We’ll settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio

Come all you pretty fair maids, spin us some yarn
To make us some nice clothing to keep ourselves warm
For you can knit and sew, my loves, while we do reap and mow
When we settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio
When we settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio

There are fishes in the river, just fitted for our use
There’s tall and lofty sugar cane that will give to us its juice
There’s every kind of game, my boys, also the buck and doe
When we settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio
When we settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio

When we settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio
When we settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio
Arthur Chapman, “Out Where the West Begins” (1917)

Out where the handclasp’s a little stronger,
Out where the smile dwells a little longer,
    That’s where the West begins;
Out where the sun is a little brighter,
Where the snows that fall are a trifle whiter,
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter,
    That’s where the West begins.

Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,
Out where the friendship’s a little truer,
    That’s where the West begins;
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,
Where there’s laughter in every streamlet flowing,
Where there’s more of reaping and less of sowing,
    That’s where the West begins.

Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts in despair are aching,
    That’s where the West begins.
Where there’s more of singing and less of sighing,
Where there’s more of giving and less of buying,
And a man makes friends without half trying—
    That’s where the West begins.
Dear Sir:

So many people ask me what they shall do; so few tell me what they can do. Yet this is the pivot wherein all must turn.

I believe that each of us who has his place to make should go where men are wanted, and where employment is not bestowed as alms. Of course, I say to all who are in want of work, Go West!

But what can you do? and how can your family help you? Your mother, I infer, is to be counted out as an effective worker. But what of the rest? And you – Can you chop? Can you plow? Can you mow? Can you cut up Indian corn? I reckon not. And in the West it is hard to find such work as you have been accustomed to. The conditions of living are very rude there.

On the whole I say, stay where you are; do as well as you can; and devote every spare hour to making yourself familiar with the conditions and dexterity required for the efficient conservation of out-door industry in a new country. Having mastered these, gather up your family, and Go West! Yours,

Horace Greeley

R.L. Sanderson

Duxbury, Mass
### The Lovely Ohio

Come all ye brisk young fellows who have a mind to roam  
All in some foreign counteree, a long way from home  
All in some foreign counteree along with me to go  
And we’ll settle on the banks of the lovely Ohio  
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Come all you pretty fair maids, spin us some yarn  
To make us some nice clothing to keep ourselves warm  
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That’s where the West begins.
Horace Greeley to R. L. Sanderson, 1871

New-York Tribune

New York, Nov. 15, 1871

Dear Sir:

So many people ask me what they shall do; so few tell me what they can do. Yet this is the pivot wherein all must turn.

I believe that each of us who has his place to make should go where men are wanted, and where employment is not bestowed as alms. Of course, I say to all who are in want of work, Go West!

But what can you do? and how can your family help you? Your mother, I infer, is to be counted out as an effective worker. But what of the rest? And you – Can you chop? Can you plow? Can you mow? Can you cut up Indian corn? I reckon not. And in the West it is hard to find such work as you have been accustomed to. The conditions of living are very rude there.

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Horace Greeley

R.L. Sanderson
Duxbury, Mass

Key Words and Phrases:

What does it mean to you?
Chapter I

My father was one of the restless ones who are not content to remain in one place long at a time. Late in the fall of 1838 we emigrated from Ohio to Missouri. Our first halting place was on Green River, but the next year we took a farm in Platte County. He engaged in farming and blacksmithing, and had a wide reputation for ingenuity. Anything they needed, made or mended, sought his shop. In 1843, Dr. Whitman came to Missouri. The healthful climate induced my mother to favor moving to Oregon. Immigration was the theme all winter, and we decided to start for Oregon. Late in 1843 father sold his property and moved near St. Joseph, and in April, 1844, we started across the plains. The first encampments were a great pleasure to us children. We were five girls and two boys, ranging from the girl baby to be born on the way to the oldest boy, hardly old enough to be any help.

We waited several days at the Missouri River. Many friends came that far to see the emigrants start on their long journey, and there was much sadness at the parting, and a sorrowful company crossed the Missouri that bright spring morning. The motion of the wagon made us all sick, and it was weeks before we got used to the seasick motion. Rain came down and required us to tie down the wagon covers, and so increased our sickness by confining the air we breathed.

Our cattle recrossed in the night and went back to their winter quarters. This caused delay in recovering them and a weary, forced march to rejoin the train. This was divided into companies, and we were in that commanded by William Shaw. Soon after starting Indians raided our camp one night and drove off a number of cattle. They were pursued, but never recovered.

Soon everything went smooth and our train made steady headway. The weather was fine and we enjoyed the journey pleasantly. There were several musical instruments among the emigrants, and these sounded clearly on the evening air when camp was made and merry talk and laughter resounded from almost every camp-fire.

We had one wagon, two steady yoke of old cattle, and several of young and not well-broken ones. Father was no ox driver, and had trouble with these until one day he called on Captain Shaw for assistance. It was furnished by the good captain pelting the refractory steers with stones until they were glad to come to terms.

Reaching the buffalo country, our father would get some one to drive his team and start on the hunt, for he was enthusiastic in his love of such sport. He not only killed the great bison, but often brought home on his shoulder the timid antelope that had fallen at his unerring aim, and that are not often shot by ordinary marksmen. Soon after crossing South Platte the unwieldy oxen ran on a bank and overturned the wagon, greatly injuring our mother. She lay long insensible in the tent put up for the occasion.

August 1st we nooned in a beautiful grove on the north side of the Platte. We had by this time got used to climbing in and out of the wagon when in motion. When performing this feat that afternoon my dress caught on an axle helve and I was thrown under the wagon wheel, which passed over and badly crushed my limb before father could stop the team. He picked me up and saw the extent of the injury when the injured limb hung dangling in the air.
In a broken voice he exclaimed: “My dear child, your leg is broken all to pieces!” The news soon spread along the train and a halt was called. A surgeon was found and the limb set; then we pushed on the same night to Laramie, where we arrived soon after dark. This accident confined me to the wagon the remainder of the long journey.

After Laramie we entered the great American desert, which was hard on the teams. Sickness became common. Father and the boys were all sick, and we were dependent for a driver on the Dutch doctor who set my leg. He offered his services and was employed, but though an excellent surgeon, he knew little about driving oxen. Some of them often had to rise from their sick beds to wade streams and get the oxen safely across. One day four buffalo ran between our wagon and the one behind. Though feeble, father seized his gun and gave chase to them. This imprudent act prostrated him again, and it soon became apparent that his days were numbered. He was fully conscious of the fact, but could not be reconciled to the thought of leaving his large and helpless family in such precarious circumstances. The evening before his death we crossed Green River and camped on the bank. Looking where I lay helpless, he said: “Poor child! What will become of you?” Captain Shaw found him weeping bitterly. He said his last hour had come, and his heart was filled with anguish for his family. His wife was ill, the children small, and one likely to be a cripple. They had no relatives near, and a long journey lay before them. In piteous tones he begged the Captain to take charge of them and see them through. This he stoutly promised. Father was buried the next day on the banks of Green River. His coffin was made of two troughs dug out of the body of a tree, but next year emigrants found his bleaching bones, as the Indians had disinterred the remains.

We hired a young man to drive, as mother was afraid to trust the doctor, but the kindhearted German would not leave her, and declared his intention to see her safe in the Willamette. At Fort Bridger the stream was full of fish, and we made nets of wagon sheets to catch them. That evening the new driver told mother he would hunt for game if she would let him use the gun. He took it, and we never saw him again. He made for the train in advance, where he had a sweetheart. We found the gun waiting our arrival at Whitman’s. Then we got along as best we could with the doctor’s help.

Mother planned to get to Whitman’s and winter there, but she was rapidly failing under her sorrows. The nights and mornings were very cold, and she took cold from the exposure unavoidably. With camp fever and a sore mouth, she fought bravely against fate for the sake of her children, but she was taken delirious soon after reaching Fort Bridger, and was bed-fast. Travelling in this condition over a road clouded with dust, she suffered intensely. She talked of her husband, addressing him as though present, beseeching him in piteous tones to relieve her sufferings, until at last she became unconscious. Her babe was cared for by the women of the train. Those kind-hearted women would also come in at night and wash the dust from the mother’s face and otherwise make her comfortable. We travelled a rough road the day she died, and she moaned fearfully all the time. At night one of the women came in as usual, but she made no reply to questions, so she thought her asleep, and washed her face, then took her hand and discovered the pulse was nearly gone. She lived but a few moments, and her last words were, “Oh, Henry! If you only knew how we have suffered.” The tent was set up, the corpse laid out, and next morning we took the last look at our mother’s face. The grave was near the road; willow brush was laid in the bottom and covered the body, the earth filled in—then the train moved on.
### Critical-Thinking Questions

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<th>Critical-Thinking Question</th>
<th>Text Evidence</th>
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<td>What were the greatest difficulties and dangers in making the journey?</td>
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<td>What skills did a pioneer settler need to successfully make the journey?</td>
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<td>How did these pioneers help each other along the way?</td>
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The Wisconsin Emigrant

Since times are so hard, I’ve thought, my true heart
Of leaving my oxen, my plough, and my cart
And away to Wisconsin, a journey we’d go
To double our fortune as other folks do
While here I must labor each day in the field
And the winter consumes all the summer doth yield

Oh husband, I’ve noticed with sorrowful heart
You’ve neglected your oxen, your plough, and your cart
Your sheep are disordered; at random they run
And your new Sunday suit is now every day on
Oh, stay on the farm and you’ll suffer no loss
For the stone that keeps rolling will gather no moss

Oh wife, let’s go; oh, don’t let us wait
Oh, I long to be there; oh, I long to be great
While you some rich lady – and who knows but I
Some governor may be before that I die?
While here I must labor each day in the field
And the winter consumes all the summer doth yield

Oh husband, remember that land is to clear
Which will cost you the labor of many a year
Where horses, sheep, cattle, and hogs are to buy
And you’ll scarcely get settled before you must die
Oh, stay on the farm and you’ll suffer no loss
For the stone that keeps rolling will gather no moss

Oh wife, let’s go; oh, don’t let us stay
I will buy me a farm that is cleared by the way
Where horses, sheep, cattle, and hogs are not dear
And we’ll feast on fat buffalo half of the year
While here I must labor each day in the field
And the winter consumes all the summer doth yield

Oh husband, remember that land of delight
Is surrounded by Indians who murder by night
Your house they will plunder and burn to the ground
While your wife and your children lie murdered around
Oh, stay on the farm, and you’ll suffer no loss
For the stone that keeps rolling will gather no moss

Now wife, you’ve convinced me; I’ll argue no more
I never had thought of your dying before
I love my dear children, although they are small
But you, my dear wife, are more precious than all
We’ll stay on the farm, and suffer no loss
For the stone that keeps rolling will gather no moss
The Great Western Migration

On April 30, 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte of France sold to the United States 885,000 square miles of territory in North America for $15 million. Soon Congress sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to find out just exactly what the United States had purchased. On November 7, 1805, the Lewis and Clark expedition reached the Pacific Ocean and the way to the West was opened. Fur trappers, traders, and finally pioneer settlers followed.

President James Polk stated that it was America’s “Manifest Destiny” to settle North America from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and the people of America showed their agreement by pushing the borders of the United States across the Mississippi River and ever westward. In 1841 the first group of 69 pioneers left Missouri and headed west, bound for Oregon. From 1841 until the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 more than 350,000 emigrants traveled by foot, handcart, and wagon to reach Oregon and California. At the peak of this westward migration more than 55,000 pioneers made the hazardous crossing in a single season.

The 2,000-mile journey from Missouri to Oregon was not something to be taken lightly. It was a grueling five- to eight-month ordeal. One in every seventeen travelers died along the way. If graves were evenly spaced along the Oregon Trail’s 2,000-mile length there would be a tombstone every eighty yards to mark the resting place of a pioneer who did not survive the journey.

If the journey was so dangerous, why did they go? Why would pioneers risk their own lives and the lives of their families in order to make this migration? There are many reasons. Among the most common was the promise of something better out West than they could have in the East. In 1843 a trapper who had been to Oregon’s Willamette Valley told a group of prospective emigrants that “the pigs are running around about under the great acorn trees, round and fat, and already cooked, with knives and forks sticking in them so that you can cut off a slice whenever you are hungry.” Popular publications and guide books of the time told of all the virtues of Oregon and California. One of these books reported that “As far as its producing qualities are concerned Oregon cannot be outdone whether in wheat, oats, rye, barley, buckwheat, peas, beans, potatoes, turnips, cabbages, onions, parsnips, carrots, beets, currants, gooseberries, strawberries, apples, peaches, pears, or fat and healthy babies.”

Oregon seemed, from all accounts, to be paradise on Earth. All you had to do was get there and claim your little bit of heaven. It was that hope that made it worth the risks of the journey. In addition, the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill in California in 1848 created a huge surge in the number of people choosing to emigrate to the West and try their luck in California.
These factors pulled people west while a number of factors pushed people out of the East. The first of these was a series of financial crises, the first in 1837, which brought about a depression and ruined many farmers. In addition, a series of epidemics swept many parts of the eastern United States: typhoid, dysentery, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, malaria, and yellow fever. Perhaps the most devastating of all was cholera, which had arrived from Asia in the 1830s and in 1850 accounted for more than 50,000 deaths in the United States.

Others chose to emigrate to the West for the same reason that many people came to the Atlantic shores of America two centuries before: religious freedom. The Mormon pioneers, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, left Illinois in 1846 to find a place to practice their religion without fear of persecution and settled in the Salt Lake valley of Utah. Adventurers, missionaries, land speculators, and many others with a variety of objectives followed the reasoning of Henry David Thoreau when he said, “Eastward, I go only by force, but westward I go free . . . the prevailing tendency of my countrymen.”
Debate Script Form

Moderator Question #1:
What is the best argument supporting your view of western migration?

Prepared response to Question # 1:
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Moderator Question #2:

Prepared response to Question #2:
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Moderator Question #3:

Prepared response to Question #3:
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