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GO WEST, YOUNG MAN: WESTWARD MIGRATION IN THE MID-1800S

THE WEST

Define “The West”

- i. Changed over time. For our purposes, it is the area west of the Mississippi and post 1850.
 - (1) American Frontier
 - (2) Wild West
 - (3) Western Frontier
 - (4) Old West

Manifest Destiny

- i. Texas
- ii. California
- iii. Oregon
- iv. Utah
- v. Civil War
- vi. Railroads

Land!

- i. Land Ordinance of 1785: <https://www.in.gov/history/2478.htm> and [https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=028/lljc028.db&recNum=386&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field\(DATE+17850520\)::%230280388&linkText=1](https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=028/lljc028.db&recNum=386&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field(DATE+17850520)::%230280388&linkText=1)
- ii. Donation Land Claim Act of 1850: https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/Pages/records/aids-land_federal.aspx and <https://govtrackus.s3.amazonaws.com/legislink/pdf/stat/9/STATUTE-9-Pg496.pdf>
- iii. The Homestead Act of 1862: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/homestead-act>
- iv. Pacific Railroad Act of 1862: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/pacific-railway-act>
- v. The Morrill Act of 1862: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/morrill.html>

- vi. Timber Culture Act of 1873: <https://www.mnopedia.org/thing/timber-culture-act-1873>

WHY GO WEST?

- i. Expelling Forces
 - 1) Lack of economic success
 - 2) Changing means of making a living - increased mechanization affected hand/skilled crafts
 - 3) Overcrowding
 - 4) Uncongenial social, political, cultural, and/or religious atmosphere
 - 5) Belief that processes of urbanization and industrialization were corrupting people and hindering the proper raising of children
- ii. Attracting Forces
 - 1) Hope for economic improvement
 - 2) Adventure and lure of nature
 - 3) Correspondence with friends and families who had migrated before
 - 4) The abundance of and great availability of land was probably the strongest attracting factor.
- iii. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/westward-expansion-encounters-at-a-cultural-crossroads/> and <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/resource-library-westward-expansion>

MIGRATION RECORDS

Migration across the United States did not require passenger lists or even documents to show moving from one state to another. It can make migration research more difficult and creative. Let's explore some ideas and sources that can help you find your ancestors.

Ideas

- i. Transportation Records
- ii. Census Records
- iii. Directories
- iv. Church Records
- v. Plat Maps
- vi. Land and Property Records
- vii. Voting Records
- viii. Tax Records
- ix. Merchant Records
- x. Local Histories
- xi. Medical Records
- xii. Business Records

- xiii. Diaries and Journals
- xiv. Letters
- xv. Court Records
- xvi. School Records

Sources

- i. Barkan, Elliott Robert, ed. Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration. 4. Vol. 4. 4 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013.
- ii. Billington, Ray Allen. Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier. 5th Ed. New York: Macmillan, 1982. WorldCat 0023098600
- iii. Bradsher, Greg. "How the west was settled: the 150-year-old homestead act lured Americans looking for a new life and new opportunities." Prologue, Winter 2012, 26-35. <https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2012/winter/homestead.pdf>
- iv. Dollarhide William. Map Guide to American Migration Routes, 1735-1815. (Bountiful, UT: AGLL Genealogical Services, 1997) FHL book 973 E3d.
- v. Eakle, Arlene H., and Linda E. Brinkerhoff. American Migration. Tremonton, UT: The Genealogical Institute, 2001.
- vi. Flanders, Stephen A. Atlas of American Migration. New York, New York: Facts on File, c1998. WorldCat 0816031584
- vii. Myers, Eleanor. A Migration Study of the Thirty-Two States and Four Organized Territories Comprising the United States in 1850, Based upon the Federal Census of 1850. Syracuse, NY: Central New York Genealogical Society, 1977.
- viii. National Institute of Genealogy. United States Reconstructing Ancestral Migration Routes.
- ix. Turner, Frederick Jackson. The Frontier in American History. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986. WorldCat 0816509468
- x. Whitaker, Beverly. Migration Patterns in the United States --. Toronto: Heritage Productions, 2003.
- xi. FamilySearch : [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United States Migration Internal](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Internal)
- xii. National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/research/land/exploration-expansion>
- xiii. University of Washington: <https://depts.washington.edu/moving1/>
- xiv. Western Folklife Center: <https://www.westernfolklife.org/>
- xv. The Autry: <https://www.geneautry.com/museum/>
- xvi. Cyndi's List: <https://www.cyndislist.com/us/history/heading-west/>
- xvii. Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/riseind/west/>
- xviii. Elon University: [http://elon.libguides.com/American West/Internet Resources](http://elon.libguides.com/American_West/Internet_Resources)
- xix. Archives West: <http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/>
- xx. Buffalo Bill Center of the West: <https://centerofthewest.org/research/mccracken-research-library/manuscripts-and-archives/>
- xxi. State Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/state-archives.html>

- xxii. Historical Societies and Preservation Offices:
<https://www.preservationdirectory.com/preservationorganizationsresources/organizationcategories.aspx>
- xxiii. State Libraries: <https://www.lib-web.org/united-states/state-libraries/>
- xxiv. Mainstream Genealogy Databases – Ancestry \$, MyHeritage \$, Findmypast \$, and FamilySearch

NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers were the main source of information across the United States until the advent of the radio. Newspapers were often the only link to family back East other than letters.

Sources

- xxv. Newspapers.com \$ (free 7-day trial): <https://www.newspapers.com/>
- xxvi. Newspaper Archive \$: <https://newspaperarchive.com/>
- xxvii. GenealogyBank \$ (free 7-day trial): <https://www.genealogybank.com/>
- xxviii. Elephind: <https://elephind.com/>
- xxix. Lists of online newspapers by state:
<https://sites.google.com/site/onlinenewspapersite/Home/united-states-online-historical-newspapers>, <https://www.theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html>, <https://www.thoughtco.com/us-historical-newspapers-online-by-state-1422215>, and
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_online_newspaper_archives
- xxx. List of the major state newspaper repository for every state west of the Mississippi

GOOGLE!

QUESTIONS

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