

Western Expansion: Push vs Pull

Push Factors:

People east of the Mississippi River **forced** to move westward.

No Land	Crop or farm land east of the Appalachian Mountains is very limited and expensive. Little to no land for people to make or sustain a living.
Not Enough Jobs	Mass immigration, mostly because of the potato famine, Irish, Italian, German and more Europeans come to America. This leads to a growing population and a need for more opportunities.
Overcrowded Cities	As people immigrate to American Coastal cities due to a need for more opportunities and access to resources. Cities became overcrowded. There is a lack of housing, few jobs and diseases caused by poor sanitation.
Religious Oppression	New Religious group, Latter Day Saints or Mormons, are persecuted by Christian groups because of the practice of polygamy and communal living. LDS moved further and further west to avoid persecution. From NY-OH-MO-IL-UT.
Slavery	Cotton as a commercial crop was very profitable with slave labor. With a growth of the US, plantation owners needed to expand west to continue to make money. The west offers more land, more plantations, more slavery, more profit.

Pull Factors:

People east of the Mississippi River **wanted** to move westward.

Liberty/Freedom	Free to work for yourself choose to live as you want where you want & do what you want. There were less “laws and regulations”. Women and runaway slaves looked for a fresh start.
Freedom of Religion	Secluded areas free to practice personal religious beliefs without the interference of others, “Mormon Migration”. Christian Missionaries sought to convert native populations and spread Christianity.
Land	Land was cheap and abundant out west, most open to farming & ranching. Individuals can purchase/homestead land to make a living.
Jobs/Opportunities	Groups of people looked new opportunities and ways to make money. Many people were needed for Fur Trapping, Farming, Ranching, Gold Mining, Merchants/Traders, construction of the Railroad/Telegraph
Gold Rush	In 1848 while building a sawmill in California, gold is discovered. Word spread quickly and 80,000 people move to California in 1849. People look to make a fortune and become wealthy. Also, in 1859, Colorado had a large gold rush as a part of Pike’s Peak or Bust!