

Trails to the West

The Big Idea

The American West attracted a variety of settlers.

Main Ideas

- During the early 1800s, many Americans moved west of the Rocky Mountains to settle and trade.
- The Mormons traveled west in search of religious freedom.

Main Idea 1: During the early 1800s, many Americans moved west of the Rocky Mountains to settle and trade.

- Some of the first Americans in the West were *mountain men*: fur traders and trappers.
- Many settlers traveled west over the Oregon Trail.
- The Santa Fe Trail was another important path west.

Mountain Men

- Fur traders and trappers were some of the first Americans to explore the West.
- **John Jacob Astor** created one of the largest fur businesses, the American Fur Company.
- **Rendezvous- Yearly meeting of fur trappers. Sold furs and bought supplies.**
- Astor founded Astoria, one of the first settlements in Oregon Country.

Oregon Trail

-Left from Independence, MO

- Settlers were lured by rich resources and the mild climate.
- The trail was 2,000 miles, beginning in Iowa or Missouri and ending in Oregon or California.
- It was a hard journey because of food shortages, bad weather, and mountains and rivers that were difficult to cross.
- Former Mountain Men became trail guides on Oregon Trail

Santa Fe Trail

- The route led from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- Was originally a Native American trading route
- Traders used the route to trade American goods for Mexican goods; traders made high profits.
- Difficult journey due to hot desert and rough mountains

Main Idea 2: The Mormons traveled west in search of religious freedom.

- Joseph Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in western New York in 1830.
- Their book of religious teachings is called the *Book of Mormon*.
- Church members were persecuted because of beliefs, including polygamy (one man married to several women).
- Joseph Smith was murdered by a mob in 1844.
- **Brigham Young** became the new head of the church and moved the group to Utah.
 - Thousands of Mormons took the Mormon Trail to Utah.
 - By 1860, there were about 40,000 Mormons in Utah.