

## tpo\_20\_passage\_1

The story of the westward movement of population in the United States is, in the main, the story of the expansion of American agriculture-of the development of new areas for the raising of livestock and the cultivation of wheat, corn, tobacco, and cotton. After 1815 improved transportation enabled more and more western farmers to escape a self-sufficient way of life and enter a national market economy. During periods when commodity prices were high, the rate of westward migration increased spectacularly. "Old America seemed to be breaking up and moving westward," observed an English visitor in 1817, during the first great wave of migration. Emigration to the West reached a peak in the 1830's. Whereas in 1810 only a seventh of the American people lived west of the Appalachian Mountains, by 1840 more than a third lived there. Why were these hundreds of thousands of settlers-most of them farmers, some of them artisans-drawn away from the cleared fields and established cities and villages of the East? Certain characteristics of American society help to explain this remarkable migration. The European ancestors of some Americans had for centuries lived rooted to the same village or piece of land until some religious, political, or economic crisis uprooted them and drove them across the Atlantic. Many of those who experienced this sharp break thereafter lacked the ties that had bound them and their ancestors to a single place. Moreover, European society was relatively stratified; occupation and social status were inherited. In American society, however, the class structure was less rigid; some people changed occupations easily and believed it was their duty to improve their social and economic position. As a result, many Americans were an inveterately restless, rootless, and ambitious people. Therefore, these social traits helped to produce the nomadic and daring settlers who kept pushing westward beyond the fringes of settlement. In addition, there were other immigrants who migrated west in search of new homes, material success, and better lives. The West had plenty of attractions: the alluvial river bottoms, the fecund soils of the rolling forest lands, the black loams of the prairies were tempting to New England farmers working their rocky, sterile land and to southeastern farmers plagued with soil depletion and erosion. In 1820 under a new land law, a farm could be bought for \$100. The continued proliferation of banks made it easier for those without cash to negotiate loans in paper money. Western farmers borrowed with the confident expectation that the expanding economy would keep farm prices high, thus making it easy to repay loans when they fell due. Transportation was becoming less of a problem for those who wished to move west and for those who had farm surpluses to send to market. Prior to 1815, western farmers who did not live on navigable waterways were connected to them only by dirt roads and mountain trails. Livestock could be driven across the mountains, but the cost of transporting bulky grains in this fashion was several times greater than their value in eastern markets. The first step toward an improvement of western transportation was the construction of turnpikes. These roads made possible a reduction in transportation costs and thus stimulated the commercialization of agriculture along their routes. Two other developments presaged the end of the era of turnpikes and started a transportation revolution that resulted in increased regional specialization and the growth of a national market economy. First came the steamboat; although flatboats and keelboats continued to be important until the 1850's, steamboats eventually superseded all other craft in the carrying of passengers and freight. Steamboats were not only faster but also transported upriver freight for about one tenth of what it had previously cost on

hand-propelled keelboats. Next came the Erie Canal, an enormous project in its day, spanning about 350 miles. After the canal went into operation, the cost per mile of transporting a ton of freight from Buffalo to New York City declined from nearly 20 cents to less than 1 cent. Eventually, the western states diverted much of their produce from the rivers to the Erie Canal, a shorter route to eastern markets.

#### question 1

What can be inferred from paragraph 1 about western farmers prior to 1815?

- A They had limited their crop production to wheat, corn, tobacco, and cotton.
- B They were able to sell their produce at high prices.
- C They had not been successful in raising cattle.
- D They did not operate in a national market economy.

#### question 2

What is the purpose of the statement, "Whereas in 1810 only a seventh of the American people lived west of the Appalachian Mountains, by 1840 more than a third lived there." ?

- A To illustrate that generally population shifts occur rapidly
- B To correct a mistaken impression of American agriculture from 1810 to 1840
- C To emphasize the range and speed with which the westward migration occurred
- D To demonstrate how attractive the Appalachian Mountains were to Americans

#### question 3

According to paragraph 2, all of the following are reasons why Americans migrated westward EXCEPT

- A the desire to move from one place to the next
- B the hope of improving their socioeconomic status
- C the opportunity to change jobs

D the need to escape religious or political crises

#### question 4

Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

A Because the West had more rivers and forests than the East, its soil was more productive.

B The fertile soils of the West drew farmers from regions with barren soils.

C Farmers living in western areas of the United States were more affected by soil erosion than farmers living in eastern areas.

D The soil in western areas of the United States was richer than soil in eastern areas.

#### question 5

According to paragraph 3, what was the significance of the land law passed in 1820?

A It granted government-supported loans to farmers.

B It provided farmland at an affordable price.

C It required banks to offer loans to farmers.

D It enabled farmers to sell their land for a profit.

#### question 6

Paragraph 4 suggests that turnpikes affected farmers by

A making the price of grain uniform for both eastern and western farmers

B making western farm products more profitable than eastern farm products

C allowing farmers to drive their livestock across mountain trails

D allowing a greater number of farmers to sell their farm products in a commercial market

question 7

Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 5 about flatboats and keelboats?

- A They ceased to be used as soon as the first turnpikes were built.
- B They were slower and more expensive to operate than steamboats.
- C They were used for long-distance but not for regional transportation.
- D They were used primarily on the Erie Canal.

question 8

Paragraph 5 mentions that the Erie Canal led to a reduction in all of the following EXCEPT

- A the length of the route that goods from the West traveled across to reach eastern markets
- B the cost of transporting freight
- C the price of produce from western states
- D the amount of produce from western states that was shipped on rivers

question 9

Look at the four squares [ ] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

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question 10

Directions: An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. This question is worth 2 points.

- A. The desire to improve their livelihood often inspired people to move west.
- B. Among the people who moved to the western United States were a number of artisans.
- C. The fertility of western farmland as well as favorable government policies supported agricultural gains.
- D. Steamboats were originally used to transport passengers rather than freight.
- E. Commercial farming in the West was greatly enhanced by improvements in land and water transportation.
- F. The transportation revolution resulted in regional economies that operated independently of a national market economy.