

Chapter 121d -- The Westward Movement Accelerates



Dates:
1840

Sections:
• Homesteaders Relocate West To The Mississippi River

Time: 1840

Homesteaders Relocate West To The Mississippi River



A Sizable Wagon Train Heading West Toward The New Frontier

The 1840 Census shows that population gains have been recorded all five regions of the country since 1820 – with the greatest by far in the Northwest and Southwest regions.

U.S. Population Shifts By Region

	1820	1840	Growth
Northeast	4,360	6,761	55%
Northwest	793	2,968	374
Border	1,467	2,191	49
Southeast	2,558	3,288	29
Southwest	460	1,855	403
Total	9,638	17,063	77

This movement reflects what is soon called America's *Manifest Destiny*, the inexorable drive to occupy all of the continental land from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts.

It begins with the "Indian Removal" policies of Presidents Jackson and Van Buren, driving the so-called "five civilized tribes" from their eastern homes and into the Oklahoma Territory – and replacing them with white settlers.

It will continue later, west of the Mississippi River, as pioneers occupy more of the Louisiana Purchase lands and those subsequently taken in the 1846-47 Mexican War.

But as of 1840, more than one in four Americans is already living west of the Appalachian Mountains, from Ohio to Illinois and Alabama to Louisiana.

Geographical Distribution Of US Population

	1820	1840	Change
The Old East	87%	72%	(15 Pts)
The New West	13	28	+15
Total	100	100	

These shifts in "shares" of the total population will, of course, translate into a reallocation of the roughly 220 seats in the House of Representative, most obviously to the benefit of states in the North and West.