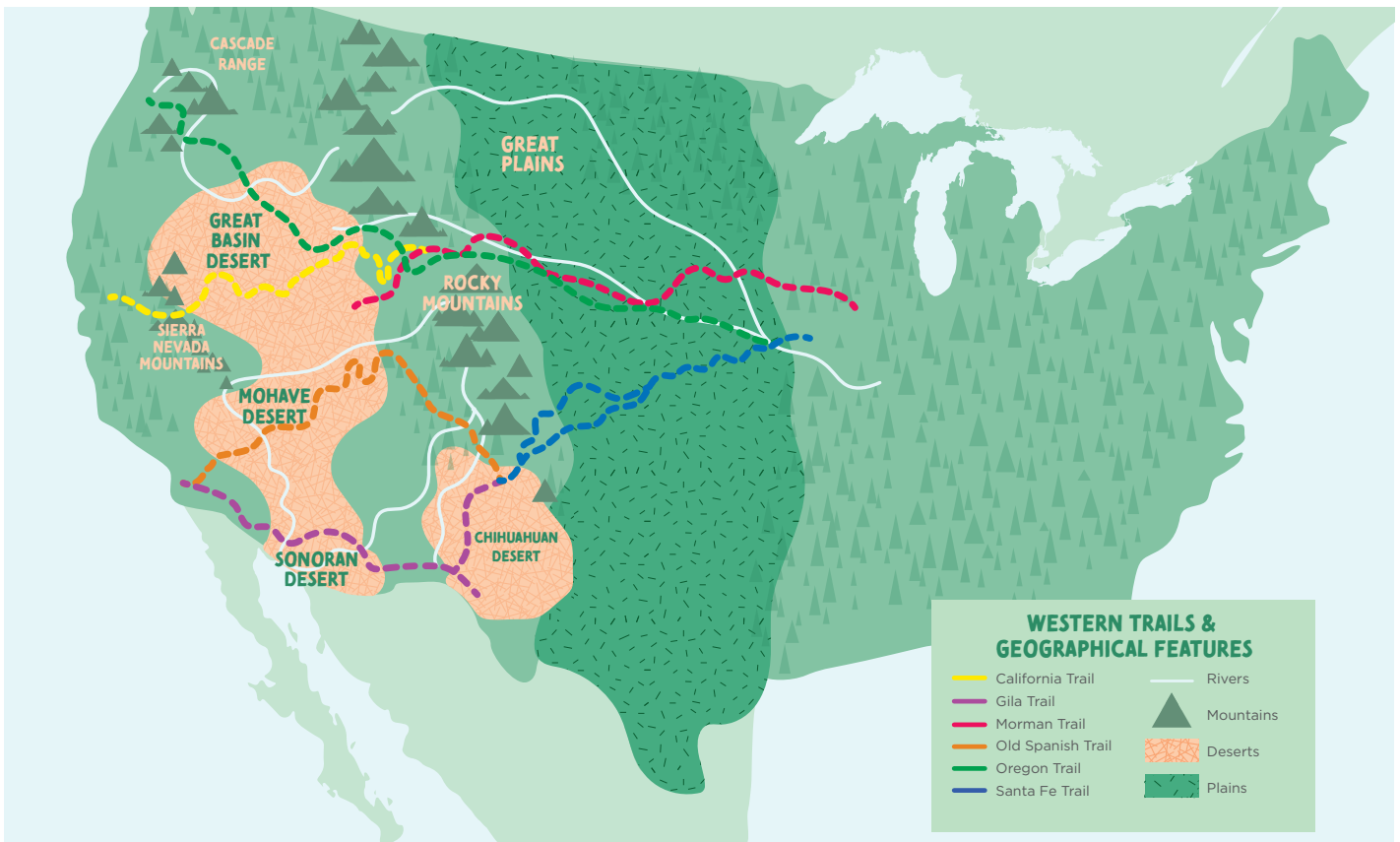


Westward Expansion

Westward Expansion was the movement of millions of people across the country during the 1800s. This *mass migration* of people, both American-born and born in other countries, resulted in the expansion of the United States from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. The idea of free land, riches from gold, beautiful surroundings, and religious freedom were some of the factors pulling people west. While many people chose to move west for a better life, other people including different Native American tribes were forced to move west. Westward Expansion also greatly affected both the Mexican American and Native American people who had already been living in the West for years. These communities lost land and struggled to keep their way of life.

Whether walking alongside a *covered wagon*, riding in a *stagecoach*, or pulling a *handcart*, traveling west for hundreds or thousands of miles was no easy task. These travelers faced difficult conditions including limited supplies, extreme weather, wild animals, diseases, loss of family members, and challenging stretches of land including desert, grasslands, mountains, and rivers. Look closely at the map below to learn more about six of the trails that people traveled along during their journey west.



Glossary

Covered wagon: a large wagon with a high, bonnet-like canvas top

Handcart: a two-wheeled cart pulled along a trail to carry food, supplies, and personal belongings

Mass migration: the movement of large groups of people from one place to another place

Stagecoach: a large, closed horse-drawn (or mule-drawn) vehicle formerly used to carry passengers and often mail along a regular route between two places

Westward Expansion

Learn more about Westward Expansion by analyzing (studying) art.

Take a moment to look closely at the *American Progress* painting that was created by John Gast in 1872.



Westward Expansion

Now that you've observed the *American Progress* painting, describe what you see in the painting by answering the questions in the chart on a piece of paper or in the space provided.

ART ANALYSIS QUESTIONS	MY ANSWERS
What types of different people do you see?	
What are the different people doing?	
What are the different types of transportation you see?	
What kinds of animals do you see?	
What else do you see in the environment (plants, bodies of water, other landforms, etc.)?	
What direction (north, south, east, or west) are the different types of people, animals, and transportation moving? Why do you think they are moving in this direction?	
What does your eye focus on in this painting? Why?	
What two items is the woman dressed in white holding? Why do you think she is holding these particular items?	
What colors (light or dark) does the artist use on the right-hand side of the painting? Why do you think the artist uses these colors?	
What colors (light or dark) does the artist use on the left-hand side of the painting? Why do you think the artist uses these colors?	
What else do you notice in the painting?	

Westward Expansion

Art tells stories. Make a hypothesis (educated guess) about what story you think the artist, John Gast, is trying to tell through his *American Progress* painting. Write your hypothesis on a piece of paper or in the space below.

My Hypothesis

Westward Expansion

Prove or disprove your hypothesis by reading the caption label about *American Progress*. A caption label gives detailed information about art.

American Progress Caption Label

American Progress

1872

John Gast

United States (born in Prussia), 1842–1896

Oil on canvas

Autry Museum of the American West: 92.126.1

George Crofutt, a *publisher* of popular western travel guides, worked with John Gast to create *American Progress*. Crofutt later included a print of Gast's painting in his guidebooks. This painting *represents* "Manifest Destiny," or the idea that the United States had the right to live on all of the land between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean even though other people including Native Americans and Mexican Americans were already living there.

This painting is full of details created to communicate a *favorable* view of Westward Expansion. The woman in the center of the painting is supposed to symbolize "Progress," as she holds a book representing education and a *telegraph* line representing technology. This woman dressed in white leads the march of *progress* westward with covered wagons, explorers, farmers, *fur trappers*, gold seekers, railroads, settlers, and stagecoaches joining her. Together they are moving from the already-*developed* East, which is shown on the right-hand side of the painting with light colors, to the unfamiliar land of the West, as shown on the left-hand side of the painting with dark colors. Native American people can also be seen running away from the progress that the woman in white brings with her.

Glossary

Developed: Something that is powerful and advanced.

Favorable: Something that is considered good or positive.

Fur trappers: People who hunt and trap animals.

Progress: a forward or onward movement; continuous improvement.

Publisher: a person or company that prepares and issues books, journals, or other works for sale.

Represents: to serve as a sign or symbol.

Telegraph: a method of sending messages along a wire by converting it into electronic impulses.

Westward Expansion

Now that you have learned more about the story that John Gast is telling through *American Progress* from the caption label, think about whose voices (opinions, beliefs, point of view, etc.) are being heard or not heard in this story. Write your answers to the questions in the chart on a piece of paper or in the space below.

QUESTIONS	ANSWER EXAMPLES	MY ANSWERS
<p>Whose voices are being heard in the story that <i>American Progress</i> is telling?</p> <p>Explain your answer.</p>	<p>Children Explorers Farmers Fur trappers Gold seekers Men Mexican Americans Native Americans Settlers Women Other</p>	
<p>Whose voices are not being heard in the story that <i>American Progress</i> is telling?</p> <p>Explain your answer.</p>	<p>Children Explorers Farmers Fur trappers Gold seekers Men Mexican Americans Native Americans Settlers Women Other</p>	
<p>What is something new that you learned about Westward Expansion by analyzing <i>American Progress</i>?</p>		

Westward Expansion

Let your voice be heard by telling your family's American West story. Ask a family member about how and why your family ended up in the American West. The Autry Museum defines the American West as everything west of the Mississippi River. Then write the answers to the questions in the chart on a piece of paper or in the space below.

QUESTIONS	ANSWER EXAMPLES	MY ANSWERS
Which family member(s) first moved to the American West?	Aunt Dad Grandfather Grandmother Mother Uncle You	
When did our family move to the American West?	General date Specific date	
Where did our family move from? Where did our family move to?	City Country State Town	
Why did our family move to the American West?	Better life Better weather Job opportunity Leaving conflict Less expensive To be by family Other	
How did our family move to the American West?	Airplane Automobile Boat Bus Train Walk Other	
What challenges did our family experience from moving? What successes did our family experience from moving?		

Westward Expansion

Share your family's American West story through art. Based on the answers from PART 7, create a drawing or painting that shares your family's American West story. Include a title for your art. Create your art on a piece of paper or in the space below.

Title:



Westward Expansion

Write a caption label that gives detailed information about your piece of art using the caption label format below. You can also look at the *American Progress* caption label to help you write your own caption label. Then explain what your painting or drawing is about on a piece of paper or in the space below.

Caption Label Format

Title of your art

Date the art was created

Your name

Materials used to create the art

Include a summary explaining the art.

My Caption Label

Resources

John Gast (1842–1896), *American Progress*, 1872, oil on canvas. Autry Museum of the American West; 92.126.1

Westward Expansion Map Illustration by Jessica Reynolds