

PHOTO: FARMER.

The typical farmer objected to slavery on purely economic grounds. A farmer who owned no slaves could not grow crops as cheaply as a farmer who did. He could go broke or move West.

PHOTO: ANDREW JACKSON\
DEPRESSION OF 1837.

On May 10, 1837, 67 days after President Andrew Jackson retired from office, the nation suffered its first major financial collapse. The major New York banks closed precipitating a panic. The country slipped into a financial depression. Agricultural prices took a nosedive and farm surpluses flooded the markets. Farmers who could not make their mortgage payments packed what they could into wagons and headed for free land in the West.

PHOTO: EPIDEMIC.

People were also driven west by epidemics of sickness. In the 1830s a cholera epidemic started that would rage for two decades killing thousands of people. More people died in the East from disease epidemics, during this period of time, than from any other cause.

PHOTO: MORMONS.

Some people emigrated west to escape religious persecution. The Mormons were driven from their homes in Nauvoo, Illinois in 1846, by intolerant neighbors. They set out on a mass migration headed West into, literally, another country.