

PHOTO: CORONADO.

By 1543 the Spanish had surveyed North America's Pacific Coast and along the Gulf of Mexico. They had also penetrated the interior of California. Members of the Francisco Vazquez de Coronado expedition to North America in 1540, reached the Colorado River 150 miles east of San Diego.

PHOTO: TRAPPER\MOUNTAIN MAN\
MISSIONARY.

By the beginning of the Nineteenth Century a few trappers, traders, and missionaries were settling in the Western Wilderness, even as far west as Oregon and California. When they would return to the states they would take with them tales of blacker soil, bluer skies, sunnier climates and fortunes to be made.

PHOTO: EMIGRANT FAMILY.

In 1841 a small number of people, not trappers or missionaries, but farmers looking for a new home, lured by the promise of a better life, left Missouri for the Pacific Coast. Each year thereafter the number of emigrants to the West steadily increased.

PHOTO: GOLDRUSH.

The discovery of gold in California spurred a sudden increase in the number of people traversing the Oregon Trail west.

PHOTO: SLAVERY\ABOLITION.

By the mid 19th century some abolitionists found the practice of black slavery so distasteful that they pulled up stakes and headed West, hoping to find a place where there would be no sign of slavery.