

WHY THE MORMONS TRAVELLED WEST:

- They were a religious group looking for freedom to live in their own way.
- They were being attacked wherever they tried to live.
- They were united by a common religious belief and wanted to be free from persecution. The whole community pulled together.
- They were following the example of Moses, who led the Israelites through the wilderness.
- Like many other Americans, they were attracted by cheap land and a new life.

THE PROBLEMS THE MORMONS FACED ON THE JOURNEY:

- They were intending to be entirely self sufficient in their new home, so they had more to take with them. They did not intend to trade with other settlers when they arrived.
- They had to take everything they needed, not only for the length of the journey but also until they could harvest the crops they would plant, when they got to their final destination.
- Each wagon carried a family and what it needed, but going in such a large group meant that there would be insufficient grass for the livestock near to the trail.
- They had a long journey, about 2,000 km.
- They were travelling in a group of 15,000. The wagon-train spread out over 500 km of the trail. The numbers in the wagon train made the journey slower so they were in greater danger of not completing the journey before winter.
- This meant that the livestock had to be led some distance from the trail at each stop if they were to find sufficient fresh grass to eat.

WHY THE MORMONS SETTLED AT SALT LAKE:

- Brigham Young and the first Mormons arrived at Salt Lake in 1847. They wanted to live without persecution from other settlers.
- Experiences in the East meant that they were less likely to get help than other settlers. They were also looking for a place that was as remote as possible.
- They chose the Salt Lake because it was a long way from all other settlements.

THE PROBLEMS FACED AT SALT LAKE CITY 1:

- When they arrived in 1847 it was part of Mexico, not the USA. This created an extra risk of attack.
- The first job was to share the land fairly between the Mormons. This could have caused disagreements.
- Land was distributed by the Mormon Church, so its decisions were accepted by all. Big families got up to 80 acres. Smaller plots were given to older or smaller families, or those who had other jobs as craftspeople.
- They had to build houses to live in. They had to live in the wagons until this was done.
- In addition they had deliberately chosen an area where the land was poor, the climate was very harsh and there was a shortage of fresh water.
- The lake water was too salty to be of any use.
- They had to dig wells to provide water for them and their crops.

THE PROBLEMS FACED AT SALT LAKE CITY 2:

- The Mormons had to face the same problems as other homesteaders when they were establishing a new place to live on the Great Plains.
- They arrived in the autumn, so they had to plant crops before the land froze and became impossible to plough. It was difficult to plough the land the first time because the surface was hard.
- Many of the first settlers found the ground broke the ploughs they had brought with them. They had to carry out all repairs themselves.
- It was totally deserted. It was not the best farming land and so it was less likely that there would be any other settlers.
- They needed to harvest crops as early as possible the following year so that they would have food to eat. If they could not grow enough food they would simply starve.
- The Mormons had no one else to turn to for help. If they had a problem and could not solve it then it would not be solved. There were some failures: some factories failed and education was very limited.

WHY THE MORMONS WERE SUCCESSFUL:

- Brigham Young was a good leader.
- The Mormons treated the Indians as equals and converted many of them.
- The Mormons wanted to produce everything they needed for themselves. In this way they would be completely independent.
- A big irrigation ditch was rapidly dug with other ditches leading off it. This was to provide fresh water. The whole community worked together on this and other projects.
- Salt Lake City was laid out with a Temple, a square, wide streets and rectangular blocks of houses.
- In 1848 Mexico lost their war with America and the Great Salt Lake became part of the USA. If the area became a 'state' then the Mormons would take charge of the running of their State and they would be able to send representatives to the Federal government in Washington.
- In 1890 the Mormons agreed to ban polygamy and Utah became a State. Today there are 3 million Mormons in the world.