America Pushes Further West

Where would you think of if you heard someone say that he was moving West? Perhaps you would say "California" or "Oregon." You would be correct, but if you lived back in the early 1800's, your idea of "West" would be completely different. In those days, the "West" meant any land that was still frontier land. The "West" kept moving further west as America continued to grow.

Daniel Boone and the Wilderness Road

Even before the American Revolution, there were pioneers who were eager to see the West. Most of these early pioneers were unmarried men who wanted to hunt and trap animals for furs. Few had horses. Most walked



Daniel Boone is shown here leading a group of settlers to the Kentucky territory.

through the wilderness. There was not even a path to guide them. There were so many trees and rocks that it was impossible to take wagons. For these reasons, few women and children were among the early pioneers.

Daniel Boone yearned to see the wilderness of Kentucky. When some friends offered to go along with him, Daniel decided to leave his family for a while and see Kentucky. The trip was filled with adventure. They were even captured by Indians.

When he returned home, Daniel certainly had exciting stories to tell his wife and children. He hoped for the day when he could move his family to Kentucky.

The next year, Daniel Boone was asked to return to Kentucky to **blaze** a trail so that other pioneers could follow. Daniel chose thirty strong men to work with him. The trail that they made was barely more than a path through the thick forests and over the mountains. At first, the path was so narrow that it was still impossible for a wagon to travel over it. Yet this path was called the **Wilderness Road.** The first pioneers who traveled this road would have to walk or ride a horse.

Almost the same time that the American Revolution started, a settlement was built in Kentucky. It was named **Boonesborough** in honor of Daniel Boone. Then Daniel returned to his home and brought his family back to live in Kentucky.

Although the Wilderness Road was at first only a rough path, it led many of the first pioneers West. For this reason, *Daniel Boone has been called "the pioneer of pioneers."* With the passing years, the Wilderness Road was made wider. Thousands of wagons and families traveled over it.

Settling the Northwest Territory

The Northwest Territory was given to us after we won the American Revolution. Some day this large piece of land would make up the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

Our government knew that many settlers would flock to the Northwest Territory, and Congress passed a law that would bring order and government to the territory. This law was called the **Northwest Ordinance of 1787.**

The Northwest Ordinance made sure that the freedom and democracy which the states enjoyed would also be present in the territories. It guaranteed freedom of religion in the territories. It outlawed slavery in the territories. It set up terri-

torial legislatures and allowed the settlers to send representatives to Congress. In this way the settlers could still take part in the government of the United States.

The Ordinance divided land into squares measuring one mile on each side. These one-square-mile sections would be sold to settlers at $1.00 an acre.

Perhaps the most important part of the Northwest Ordinance was the promise that "education shall forever be encouraged." In order to encourage education, the Ordinance demanded that sections of land be set aside for public schools. Thus, settlers who wanted to move to the Northwest Territory were sure that schools would be there for the children to attend.

Finally, the Northwest Ordinance said that when the population of an area reached 60,000, that area could become a state and enter the Union.

There were men who desired to move their families into the Northwest Territory. Some felt too crowded where they were and wanted to move on. Others just wanted a new way of living and adventure. Together, they formed one courageous group of pioneers, helping our country to grow.

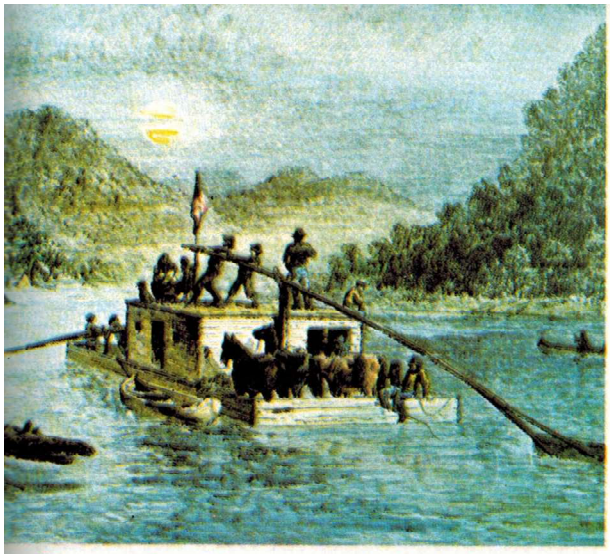
There were no highways to lead these pioneers. Since Ohio was first to become settled in the Northwest Territory, let's see how a pioneer family traveled there from Pennsylvania.

First they bought a covered wagon and loaded it with the supplies they knew they could not get in Ohio—seeds for gardens, a plow, tools, nails, guns, an iron kettle, cooking utensils, a spinning wheel, and blankets. They had to pack enough flour, salt, bacon, and other food to last them until they reached Pittsburgh.

To one side of the wagon, they tied a crate of chickens. To the other side they



These settlers on their way west have stopped to make camp for the night. The pioneers have gathered together and are enjoying some music.



Pioneer families packed all their possessions—including livestock and horses—on a flatboat so that they could travel down river to get to the frontier.

might tie a crate of piglets. Behind the wagon walked a cow. As you can see, there was not much room left to take furniture or fancy dishes. They would have to make their own homemade furniture when they reached Ohio. With chickens cackling and piglets squealing, the wagon began creaking down the rough road.

In a few days, the covered wagon reached the city of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania. Here, the father sold the wagon and bought a **flatboat,** which was a long boat with a flat bottom. Then the family unloaded their supplies in the wagon and placed them on the boat. Even the chickens, piglets, horses, and cow were placed on the boat. More food and supplies were bought.

Men gave advice to the family before they began their trip down the Ohio River to their new home:

> "Beware of Indian traps! To avoid them, keep your distance from the shore."
>
> "Keep your eyes open for fallen trees and sharp rocks in the river. They can tear the bottom of your boat open!"

The trip by flatboat could be even more dangerous than traveling in the bumpy covered wagon. Once the pioneers traveled west of Pittsburgh, they left the protection of forts and soldiers.

When the family reached their new home in Ohio, their flatboat was carefully taken apart to save the lumber and nails. Then their home was built and a garden was planted. There was plenty of work to do.

As more and more pioneers moved into Ohio, it was no longer considered the frontier. Schools were built as well as stores and churches. Then new pioneers who wished to settle in the frontier of the Northwest Territory no longer stopped in Ohio. They kept moving westward into Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

As the population grew in each new section of the country, new states were added to the original thirteen states. Vermont, which at the time of the American Revolution was considered the frontier, too, became the fourteenth

state. Kentucky and Tennessee followed.

The population of Ohio grew so quickly that in 1803, she became our seventeenth state. *As the years passed, more of our frontier became settled and more states were formed.*