



1830 to 1850

AMERICA MOVES WEST

"There is such independence, so much free uncontaminated air. I breathe free without that oppression and uneasiness felt in the gossiping circles of a settled home." Susan Magoffin, a pioneer woman, wrote these words in her diary. Her family was going west in 1846—like thousands of other Americans.

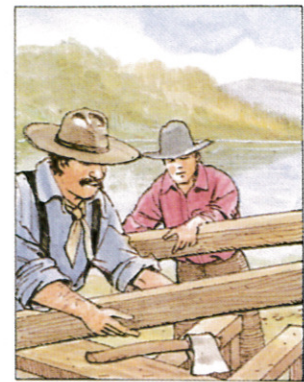
▼ The National Road, the main road west, went from Maryland to Illinois. Here, a stagecoach leaves an inn where passengers, driver, and horses have rested.

Filled with hopes and dreams, Americans headed west. They walked, rode horses, sailed boats, and rode in wagons. They were called **pioneers** because they were new people coming to a land to prepare it for others. They came from the eastern **states** in the North and the South. Some crossed the ocean from Europe before joining groups heading west.



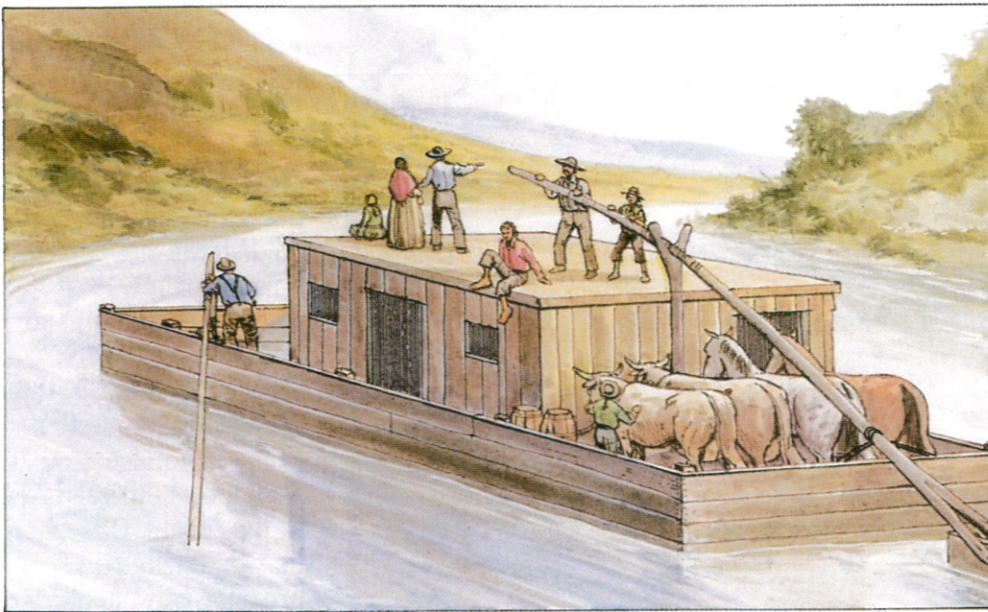
Pioneers were usually looking for land to own and farm. Land in the East was expensive, but out West it was cheap. Before the 1840s, most pioneers traveled as far west as Illinois or Missouri. After 1840, they went to Oregon and California.

▼ Heading west, this family loaded their wagon and animals onto a flatboat and traveled down a river.



▲ Along the river shores of Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, pioneers took their flatboats apart and used the wood to build a temporary shelter.

Later they would build log cabins.



▼► Pioneers chopped trees and stacked them to make walls for their cabins. Spaces between the logs were filled in with moss, clay, or mud. After the roof and fireplace were built, pioneers set split logs into the ground to make a wooden floor.



▲ A religious group, the Mormons, first lived in western New York, then in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. They were always forced to leave by neighbors who did not agree with their belief in sharing everything. Their leader, Brigham Young, led them west to the Great Salt Lake in present-day Utah. There, in 1847, they set up a new community.

Working together to get settled

The pioneers usually arrived in the spring, in time to clear the land and plant crops. Neighbors helped each other to clear out rocks, chop trees, move logs, and build cabins. A typical log cabin had one room, measuring about 16 by 20 feet (5 by 6 m). Often there was a raised loft for the children's sleeping space.

A family started its new life with perhaps only some kitchen pots and a chair. It built its own tables and benches from logs. It carved its own wooden spoons and bowls and made its own candles and soap. **Peddlers** traveled through new settlements selling some items. As the settlement grew, stores were opened by blacksmiths and other craftworkers.