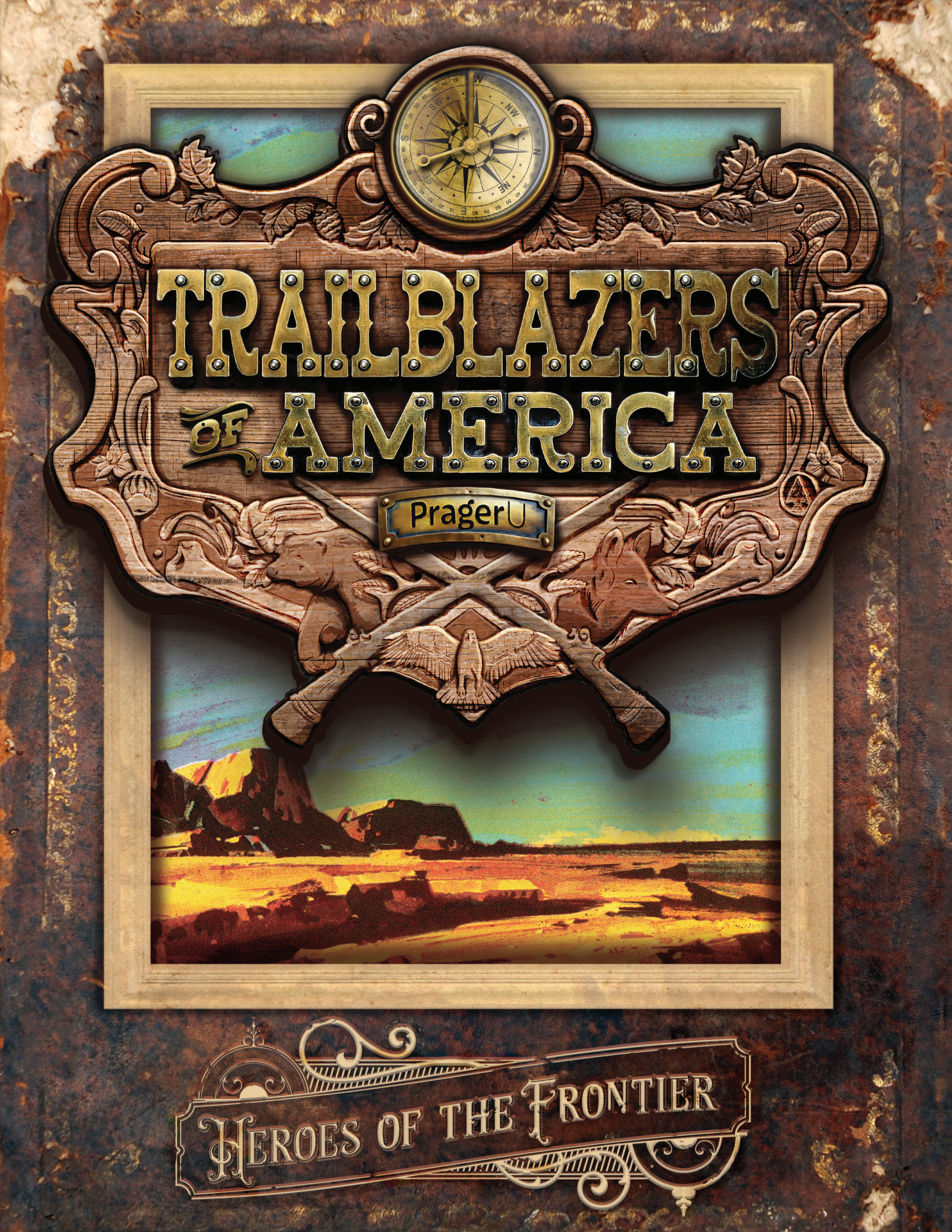

TRAILBLAZERS
OF AMERICA
PragerU
HEROES OF THE FRONTIER

PragerU

PragerU is redefining how people think about media and education. Watched millions of times every day, PragerU is the world's leading nonprofit with educational, entertaining, pro-American videos for every age. From intellectual, fact-based 5-Minute Videos and powerful personal storytelling to animated shows made just for kids—PragerU helps people of all ages think and live better.

PragerU Kids teaches history, civics, financial literacy, and American values to children across the K-12th grade spectrum. With kids shows, books, and educational resources for every grade, PragerU Kids offers content that parents and teachers trust and children love. Watch for free and learn more at PragerUkids.com.

All text and illustrations Copyright © 2025 Prager University Foundation.

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

PragerU is a registered trademark of Prager University Foundation.

Published by PragerU

15021 Ventura Boulevard #552

Sherman Oaks, CA 91403



Trailblazer

trail-blaz-er

a person who goes where others haven't; a pioneer.

a person who makes a new track through wild country.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DANIEL BOONE 01

JOHNNY APPLESEED 37

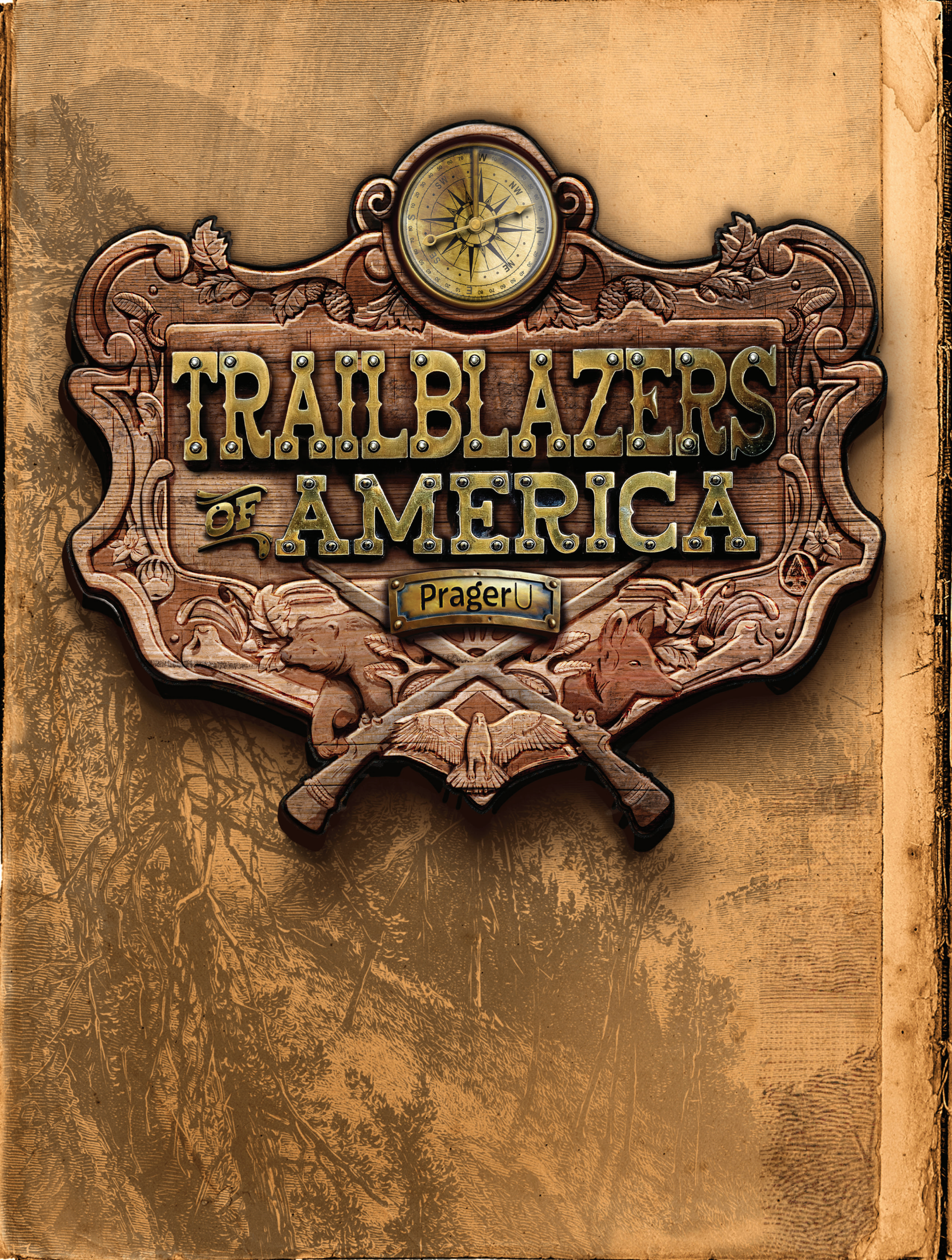
LEWIS& CLARK 69

DAVY CROCKETT 101

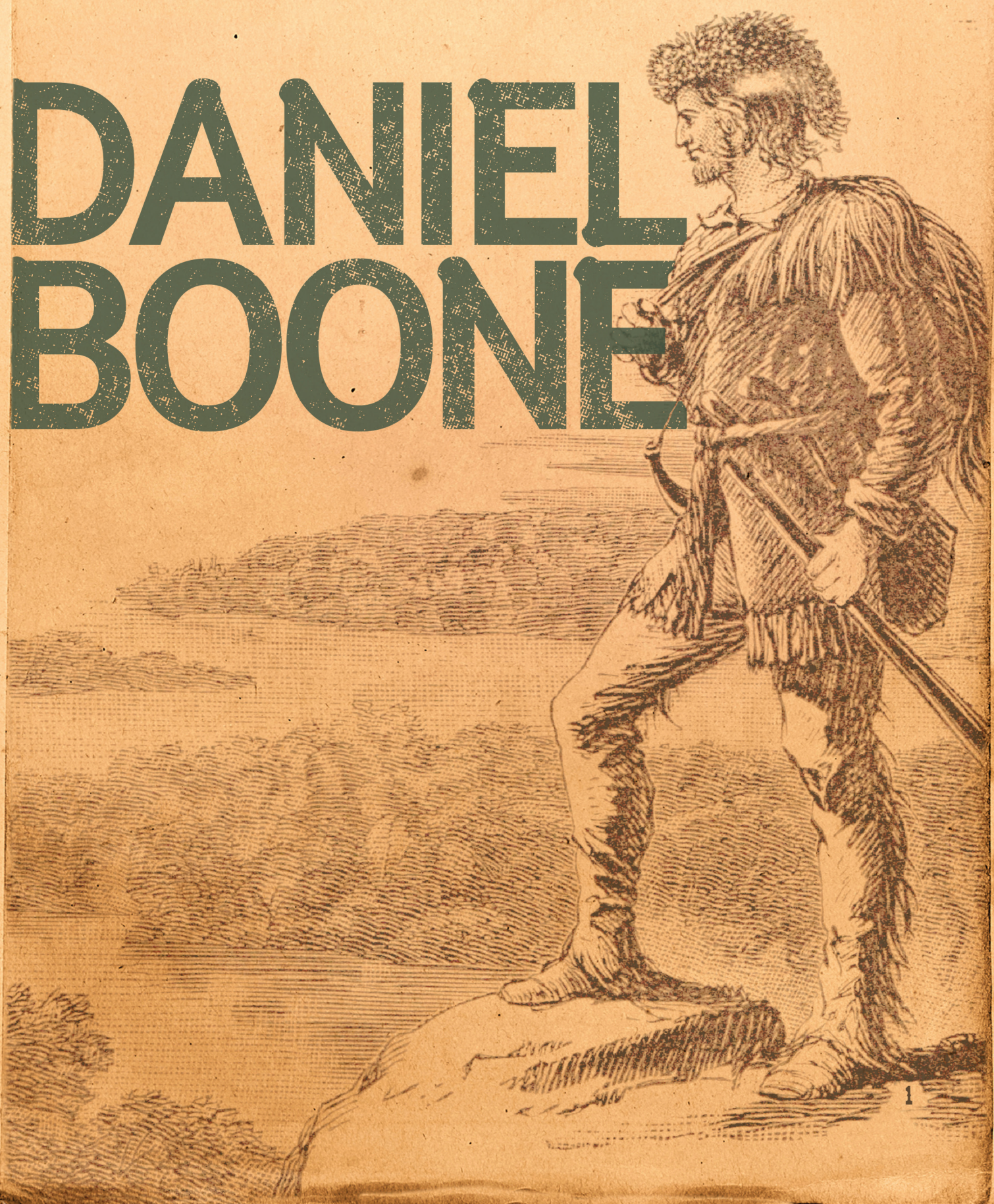
JOHN C. FRÉMONT 137

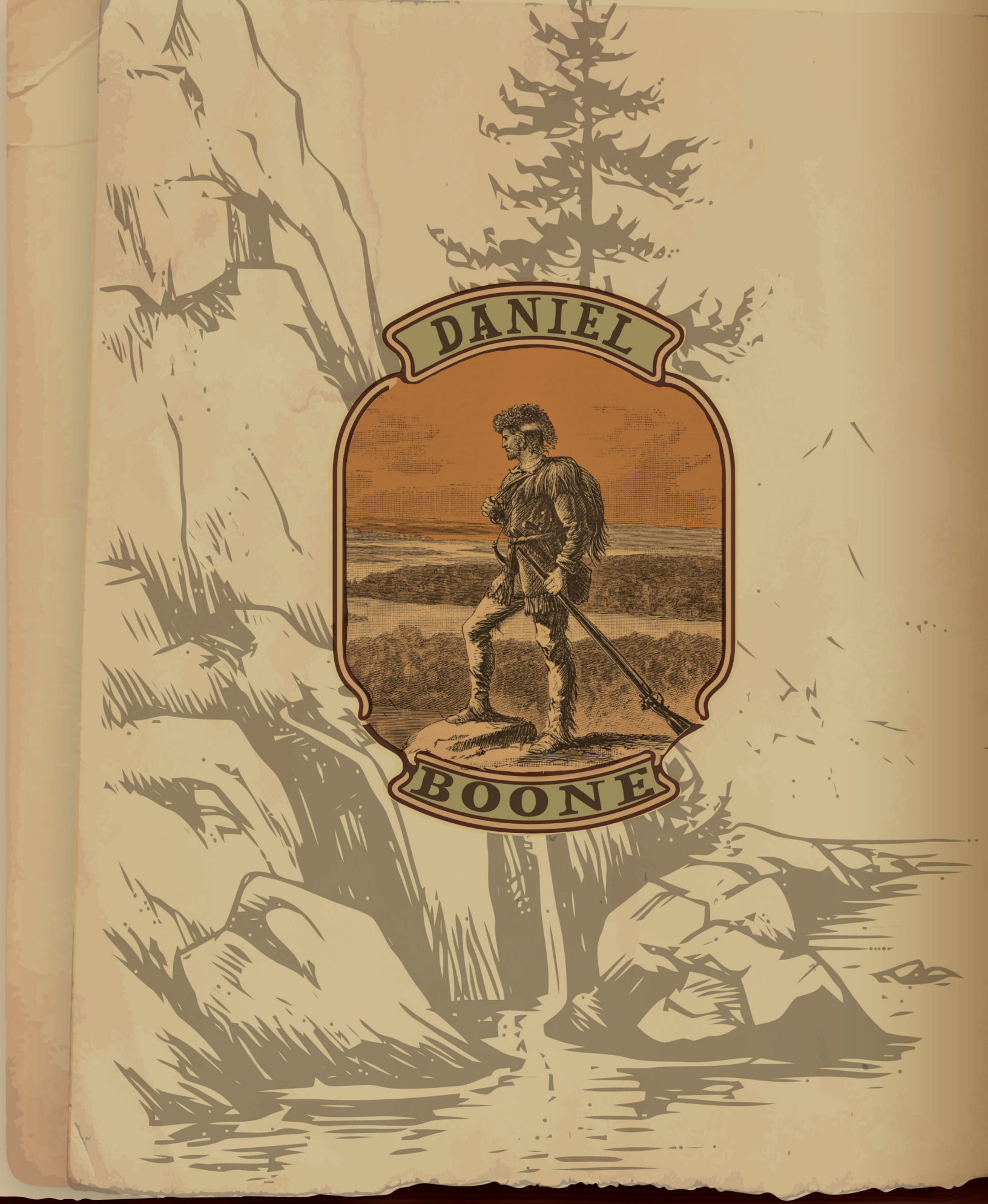
JOHN SUTTER 177

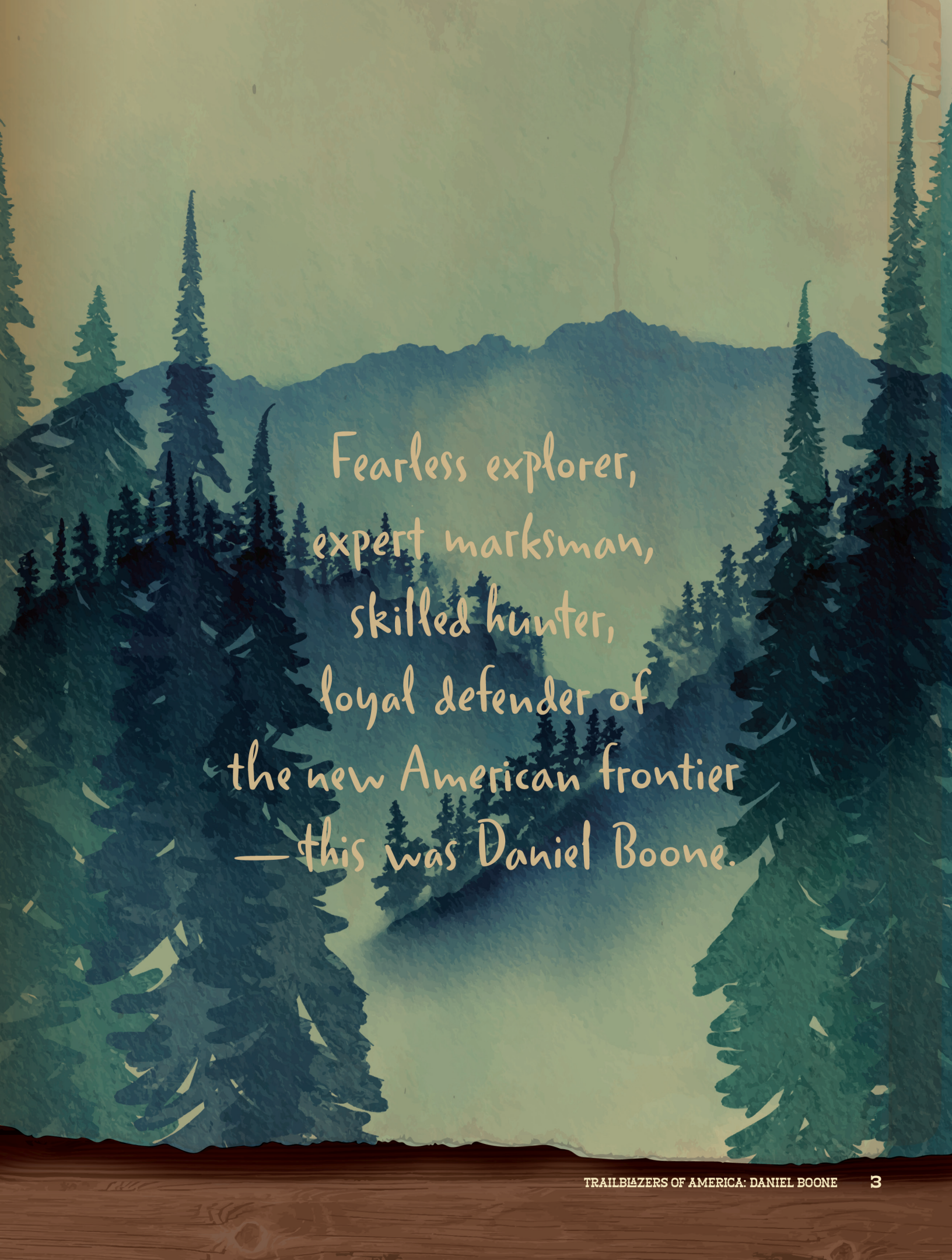
BASS REEVES 217


TRAILBLAZERS
OF AMERICA
PragerU

DANIEL BOONE




DANIEL
BOONE


Fearless explorer,
expert marksman,
skilled hunter,
loyal defender of
the new American frontier
—this was Daniel Boone.



No Ordinary Job

North Carolina, Southern Colonies, 1775.

A sharp knock sounded at the door. Daniel looked at his wife, Rebecca. This was a visit they were expecting.

A few days earlier, Daniel had been offered a job, and any minute now, they would need his answer: *take it or leave it?*

"It doesn't have to be you," Rebecca said. "They can find someone else."

"But they came to me first for a reason," Daniel replied. "I know the land better than anyone. I've hunted it, made my own camps and paths, and I know the dangers..."

He stopped short, knowing he wouldn't help his case if he brought up their oldest son James.

"We have our family to think about," his wife jumped in. "Things are good here. The last time we tried to move to the **frontier**, James was killed. I thought we were going to close that chapter and put it behind us."

But that chapter was far from closed in Daniel's mind. Their son's death was a scalding memory... but it hadn't diminished the fire still alive in him to move west. How could he forget the rushing rivers and the buzzing insects of those beautiful meadow-lands? There was still so much left to explore. Tragedy had halted his family's first attempt, but Daniel always hoped for a second chance.

Rebecca sighed. "You have that look in your eye again, Daniel."

"What look?"

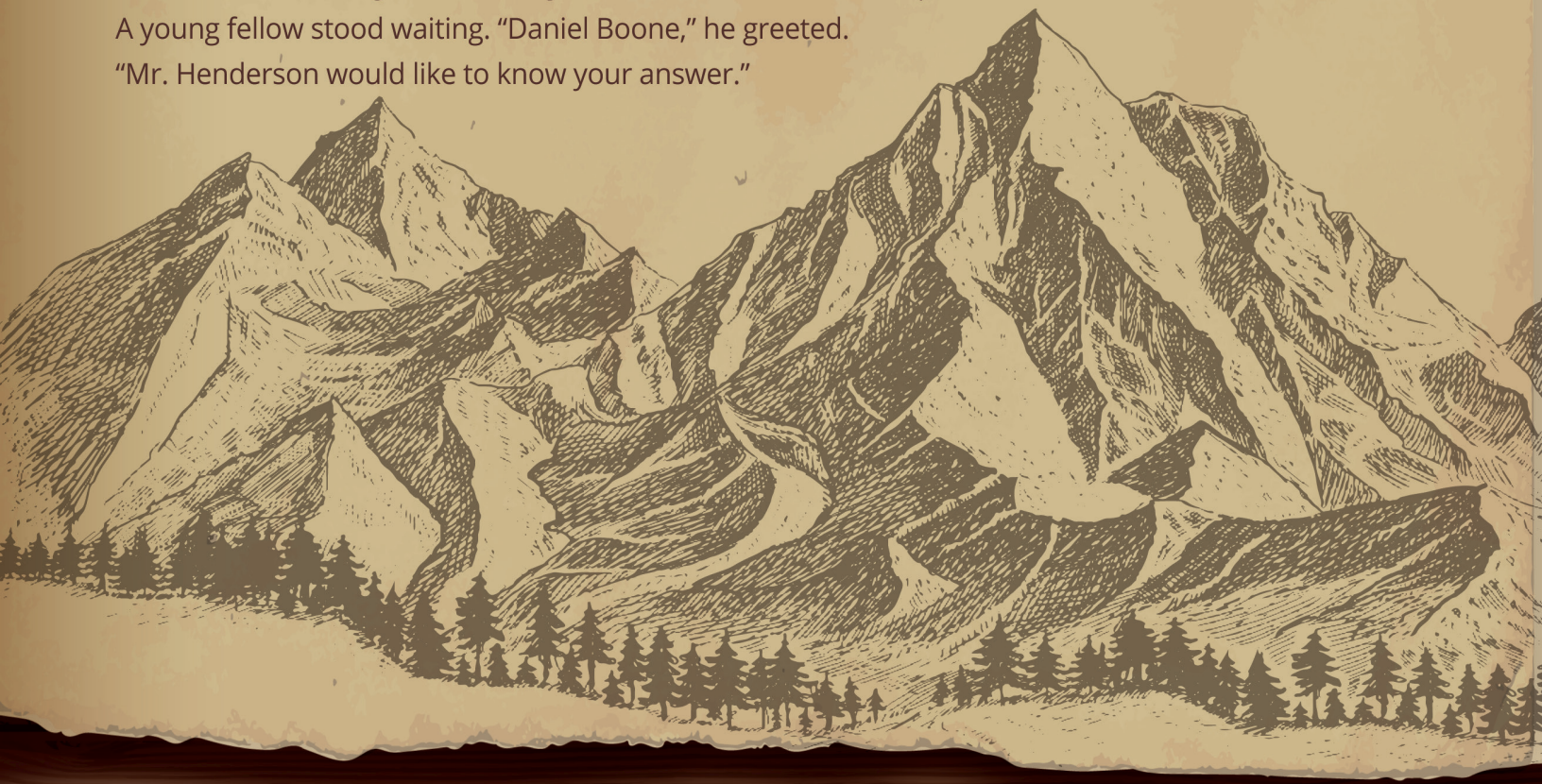
"That look you get when you're thinking about the wilderness." Rebecca gave his calloused hands a squeeze. "I know you, Daniel. I know you will never be satisfied until you explore every nook and cranny of those wild lands."

"The land," Daniel breathed, "is paradise. Our family will have a new life there—to spread out, hunt, farm, and do whatever else we like. This'll be like my hunting trips. I'll be gone a couple months, but I'll come back and bring all of you with me. Once I forge this path, it'll be easier for us to move than before."

Rebecca was silent for a long moment.

"This isn't for me. It's for you and the kids," he urged. "I can't promise it will be safe, but I promise you, it will be better than staying here under Britain's thumb. The opportunity and freedom... it's all out West."

She nodded, and her eyes were glossy with unshed tears. "I know you will do what is right."
The knock echoed again, more urgent than before. Time was up. Daniel rose to answer the door.
A young fellow stood waiting. "Daniel Boone," he greeted.
"Mr. Henderson would like to know your answer."



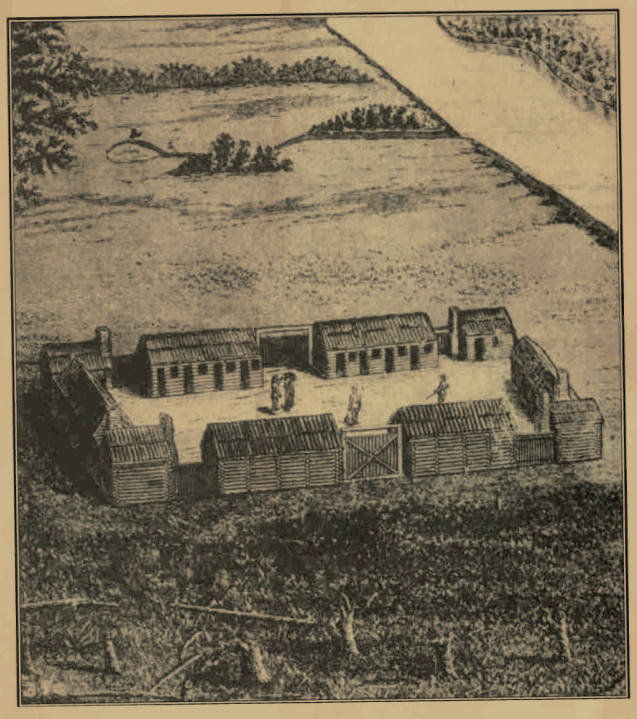
Taming the Trails to Boonesborough

Daniel Boone took the job. In March of 1775, Daniel and a group of 35 axemen set out and carved a path through the rugged **Cumberland Gap**, which was a gateway to the lands local Indians called "**Ken-te-ke**," or "the place of the meadows." Later, these lands were named Kentucky and officially became part of the United States as the 15th state. Before statehood though, Kentucky was a wild place, with dense forests, winding rivers, and formidable mountains.

Daniel was familiar with the **Appalachian Mountains**—the largest mountain range in the eastern United States—because they ran not only through Kentucky but his home colony of North Carolina. The mountains provided his family's **livelihood**. Having received his first rifle at the age of 12, Daniel took to the wilderness trails and never looked back. He spent months at a time hunting and **foraging** to bring back meat and furs to sell to other settlers.



Having seen the bounty of the land on the other side of the Appalachians, Daniel was eager to settle some for his family and stake his claim. However, the colonists still



Fort Boonesborough in Kentucky

answered to Great Britain at the time, and following the **Proclamation Line of 1763**, their mother country had strictly ordered them not to move beyond the Appalachians. To pioneer West meant disobedience to the King and Parliament.

That didn't stop people like Richard Henderson and his **Transylvania Company** from buying up land claims in the West. Those claims didn't mean much, though, without settlers to secure the land. Henderson knew Daniel Boone had the drive and the skill to get them there. But first, they needed to clear the way...

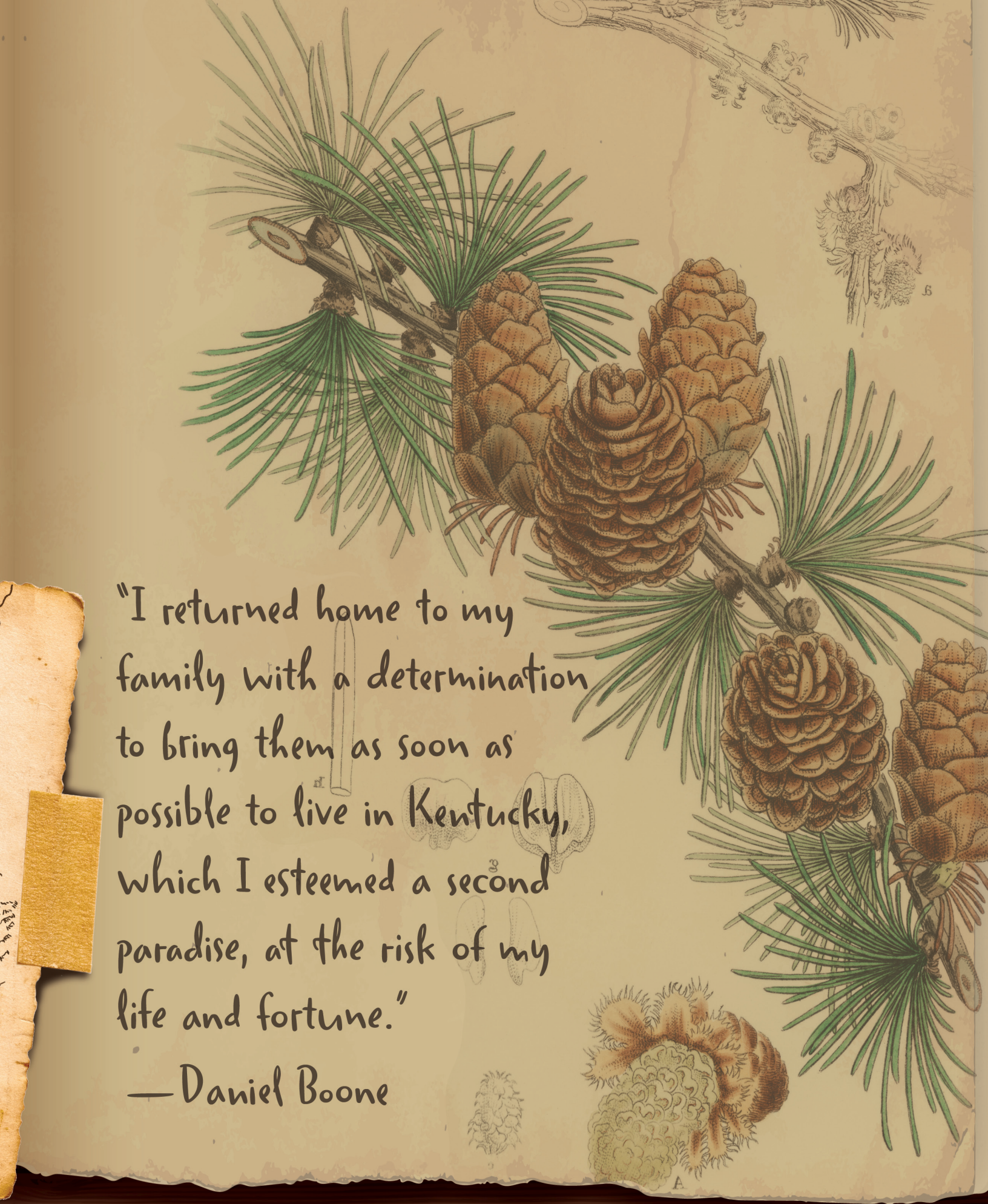
Daniel and his men didn't have much to work with. The only trails that existed were narrow and rough, used by Indian hunters and herds of migrating animals. The men shaped a new path with their grit and determination. With each swing of their axes, they came closer to Kentucky. The trail was steep and narrow, big enough only for people traveling on foot or horseback. The 200-mile trail into the heart of Kentucky would later be called the **Wilderness Road**, and over time it was widened for wagon travel. Thousands would follow it on their journey West in the years to come.

On April 1, 1775, the men began building **Fort Boonesborough**, one of the first settlements established in Kentucky. Only weeks later, the first shots of the American Revolutionary War were fired, launching the colonies into war with Great Britain.

Americans were fighting for their freedom and independence, and this battle spilled over into the frontier. The small group of settlers worked quickly on Boonesborough, knowing a Native American or British attack was likely coming.

Despite the growing conflict, Daniel was able to keep his promise and bring his family to their new home. It was a victory for Boone, but the battle to keep the settler's claim on the land was only just beginning.





"I returned home to my family with a determination to bring them as soon as possible to live in Kentucky, which I esteemed a second paradise, at the risk of my life and fortune."

—Daniel Boone

A FIELD GUIDE TO

APPALACHIAN ANIMALS





EASTERN COUGAR

These big cats were declared extinct in the 1940s, but they were common in Appalachia during Boone's time. Legend has it that as a teenager, Boone shot a cougar through the heart, just as it leaped at him in attack.

AMERICAN BLACK BEAR

Considered the most feared animal in the region, they are the only bear species that lives in the Appalachian Mountains. They are the smallest bears in North America, however, males still often grow to over 500 pounds.





WHITE-TAILED DEER

During the time of Boone, these deer were hunted by mountain men, Indians, and predatory animals. It is the most common species of deer in North and South America.



WHITE-TAILED DEER COUGAR RACCOON OPOSSUM STRIPED SKUNK BLACK BEAR COYOTE RED FOX

A FIELD GUIDE TO

APPALACHIAN PLANTS



TUPELO TREE

These deciduous trees (meaning they lose their leaves each year) are common in Appalachia. Before falling, its leaves turn magnificent shades of red, orange, and yellow. Some tupelos in Appalachia today are over 500 years old, and it's possible Boone could have once used some of them for shade or cover.

EASTERN WHITE PINE

These evergreen conifer trees are found up and down the Appalachian Mountains. They grow long needles and long slender pinecones.



TULIP TREE

These hardwood trees have broad leaves and bloom beautiful flowers each spring. Today, it is the state tree of both Tennessee and Kentucky.



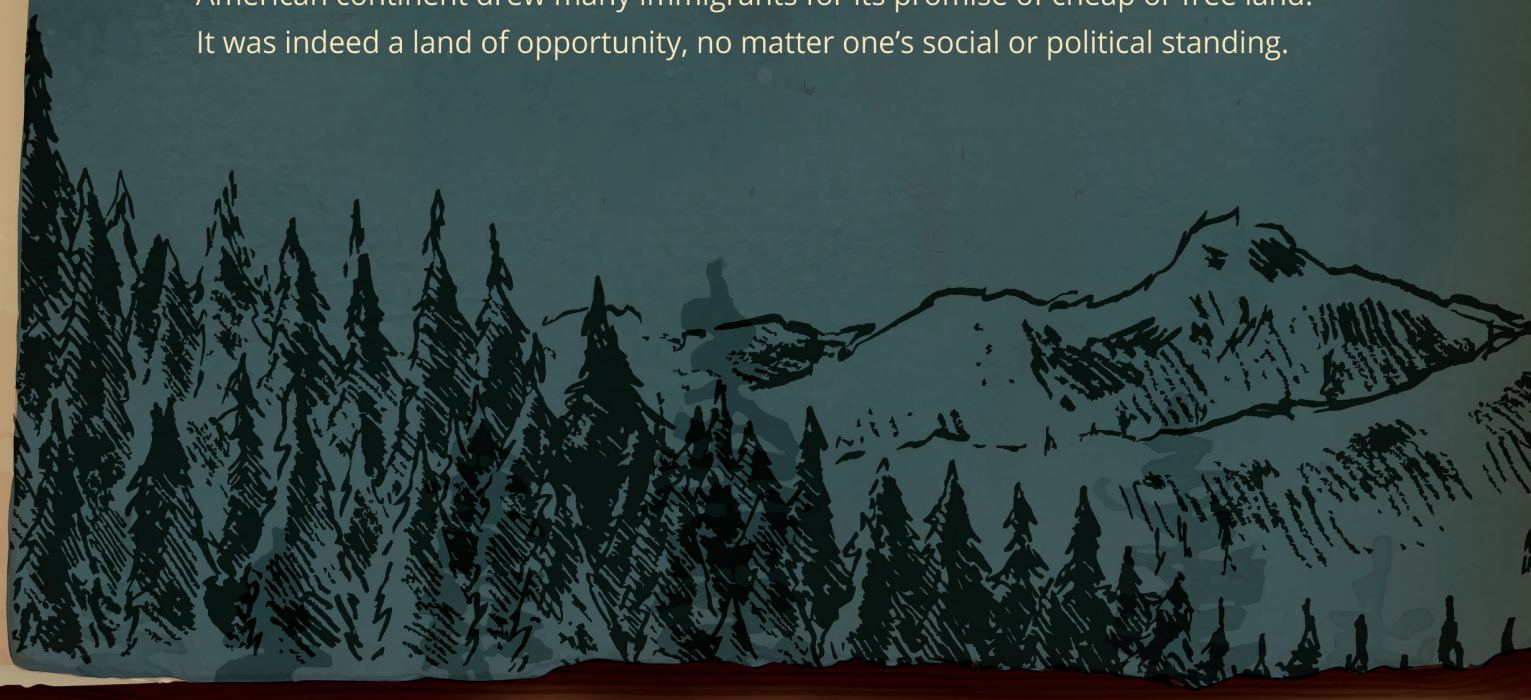
Why the West?

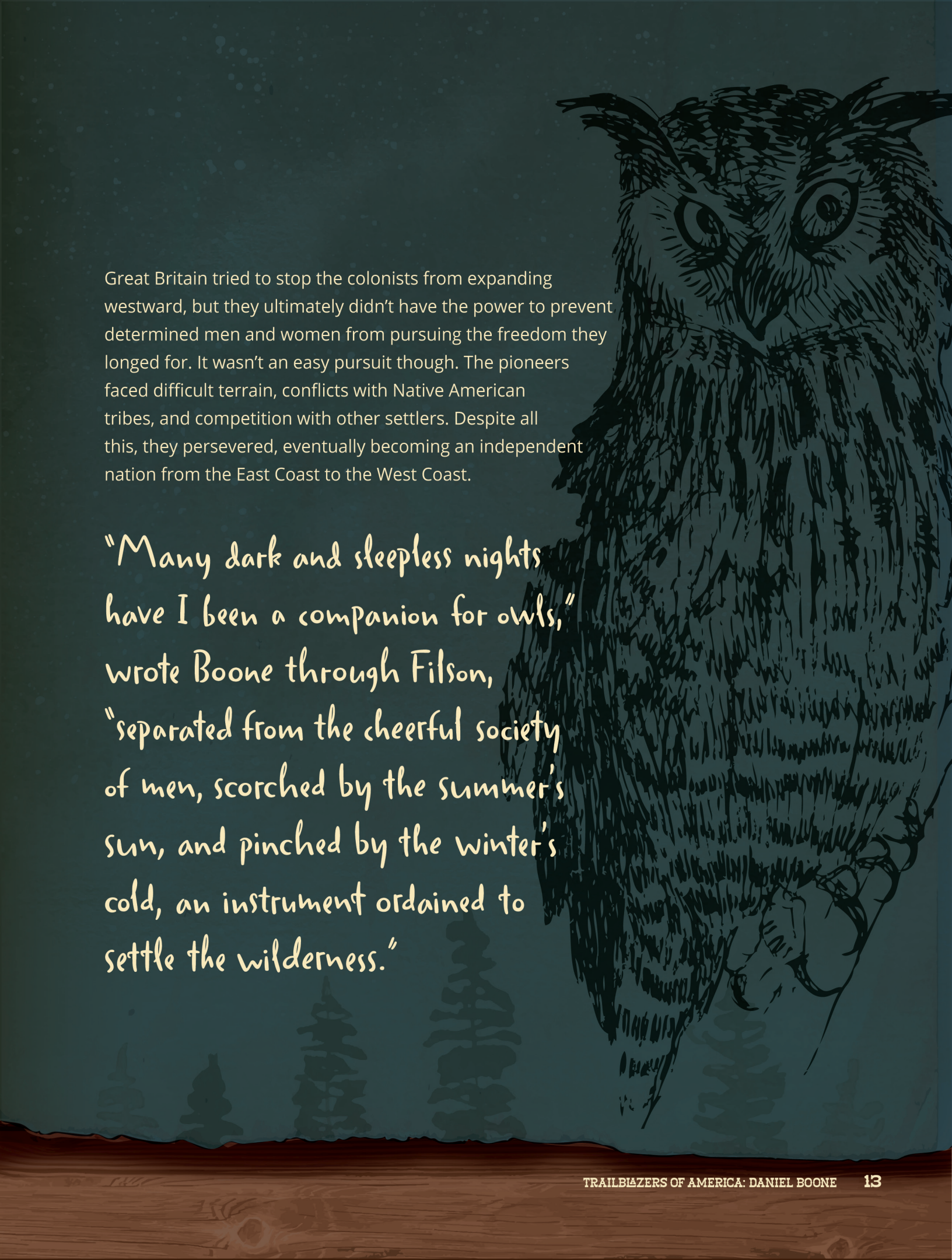
In early colonial America, the 13 colonies spread from Massachusetts down to Georgia along the Atlantic coast. But people in those colonies were not the only ones living on the continent. Westward, Native American tribes and French fur trappers (with a small number of French settlers in modern Canada) also shared the land, but after winning the **French and Indian War**, the British Empire ultimately claimed France's land in North America in 1763.

The colonists saw this as an opportunity to move West and gain freedom from Britain's rules and control. Under Great Britain's system, settlers faced many restrictions, including paying taxes and exporting their materials and goods back to the mother country.

The people wanted economic freedom. If they moved West, they could settle on fertile farmlands and hunt in the vast forests. The unexplored wilderness beyond the Appalachian Mountains promised rich, untapped resources, and settlers were eager to make their own living.

The colonists also dreamed of owning land. In Europe, there was little access to land and those who did own it were often wealthy and noble. The vast North American continent drew many immigrants for its promise of cheap or free land. It was indeed a land of opportunity, no matter one's social or political standing.





Great Britain tried to stop the colonists from expanding westward, but they ultimately didn't have the power to prevent determined men and women from pursuing the freedom they longed for. It wasn't an easy pursuit though. The pioneers faced difficult terrain, conflicts with Native American tribes, and competition with other settlers. Despite all this, they persevered, eventually becoming an independent nation from the East Coast to the West Coast.

"Many dark and sleepless nights have I been a companion for owls," wrote Boone through Filson, "separated from the cheerful society of men, scorched by the summer's sun, and pinched by the winter's cold, an instrument ordained to settle the wilderness."



A Daring Rescue

Somewhere along the Kentucky River, July 1776.

Daniel's heart raced. A small piece of brown cloth stuck to a bush near his foot. He knew it was his daughter's. They were on the right track, but Daniel still felt dread like a weight in his stomach. The Indians had a head start on them.

Show us where they took you, Daniel thought. He scoured the area for more clues or signs of a struggle.

"Over here!" someone shouted.

Further ahead, one of his men pointed down a trail with snapped branches and fresh footprints. "The Shawnee must have taken the girls this way."

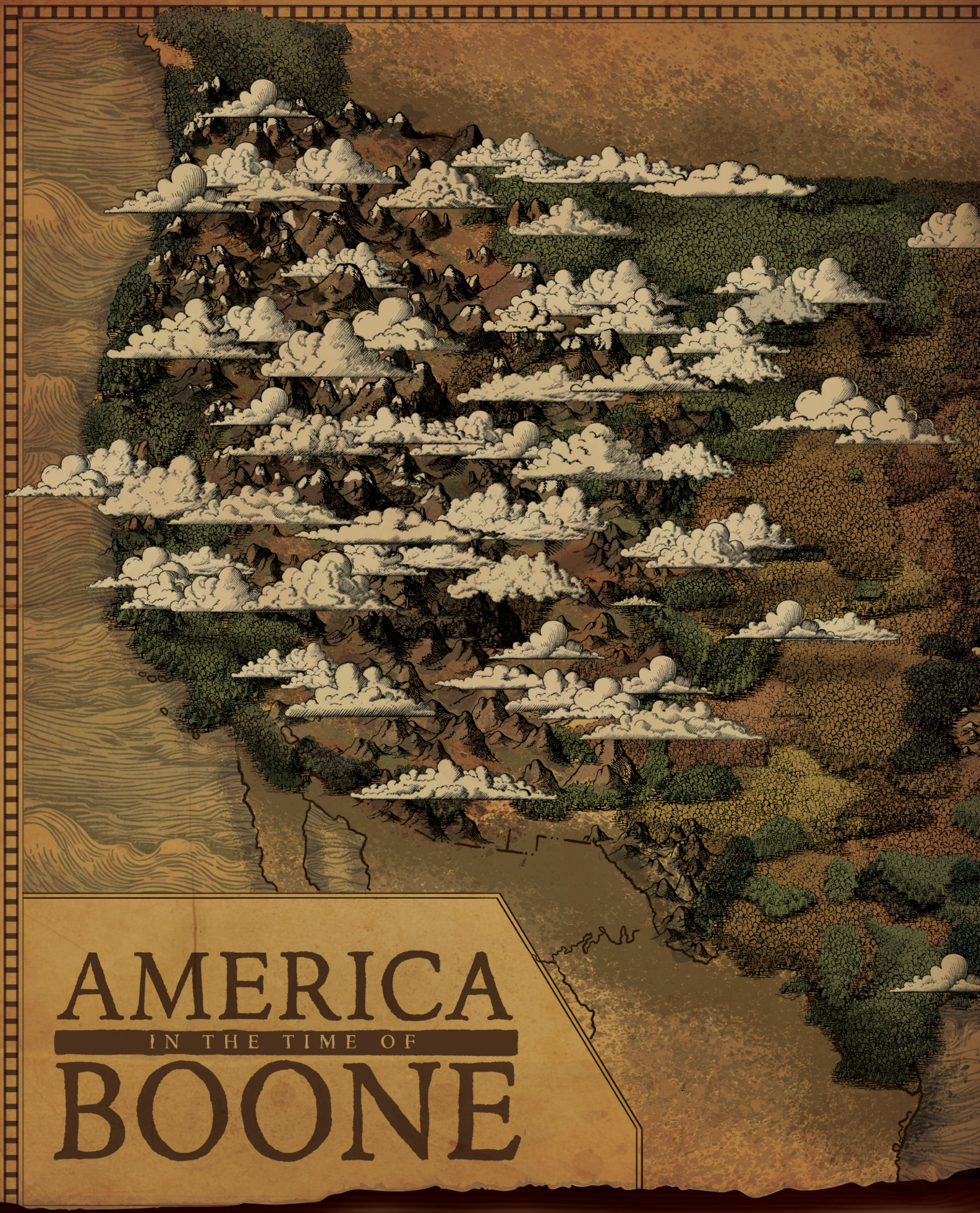
"Let's move," Daniel ordered. He took off down the trail at a run, pulling his gun off his back.

Night would fall soon, and they wouldn't be able to track again until dawn. Daniel paused to catch his breath. All sorts of awful thoughts ran through his mind. *Is Jemima okay? What will I tell Rebecca if I can't find our girl? I promised I would bring back all the girls safely.*

He refocused on the trail, trying to ground himself. Squatting to the earth, he pressed his hands to the cool dirt. That's when he felt it. The faint *thump, thump* that could have been Indian drums or deliberate stomping.

They were close, and Daniel's hunting senses kicked into full alert. He brushed off his hands and crept along the trail more slowly. When the glow of a fire came into view, Daniel motioned for his own men to surround the camp.

He checked to make sure his gun was ready to fire but prayed he wouldn't have to use it. Then, he summoned his courage and gave his men the signal.


AMERICA
IN THE TIME OF
BOONE


NEW HAMPSHIRE
BOSTON
MASSACHUSETTS
NEW YORK
RHODE ISLAND
NEW YORK CITY
CONNECTICUT
NEW JERSEY
PHILADELPHIA
PENNSYLVANIA
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
VIRGINIA
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON
GEORGIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Appalachian Mountains
Appalachian Mountains
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
OHIO RIVER
FORT BOONESBOROUGH
KENTUCKY TERRITORY
CUMBERLAND GAP
TENNESSEE TERRITORY

Out of the Frying Pan and Into the Fire

Daniel and his men ambushed the Indian captors and rescued the three teenagers, unharmed. After the Indians scattered, they returned with the girls to Boonesborough. Kidnappings, especially of women and girls, were common on the frontier, but the rescue stood out as a famous example of the Boone family character. Jemima, being her father's daughter, knew her best chance at survival was to mark her trail. She and the other two girls broke twigs, faked falling, purposely got thrown off their horses, and left berries and leaves to follow. Daniel tracked her down over three days and got all the girls safely home to their families. It was a happy ending to what could have been a tragedy for Boonesborough.

Life settled back to normal in the fort as the settlers worked hard to survive. One such necessity for the fort's survival was salt. Salt had many uses, including preserving food and treating illness. Though their fort had been built near a **salt lick**, the settlers desperately needed more during the winter of 1777-1778. Daniel led a group of around 30 men to Blue Licks, an area along the nearby Licking River where they would collect water from the springs and boil them to extract the salt. It was cold and difficult work in the middle of winter. After several weeks of successful work, the group faced a tragic turn of events.

On a bitter, cold day in February, Daniel set out to scout and hunt as usual. Several miles away from the group at the river, he found himself suddenly surrounded and seized by Indians. They brought him back to their camp, where Daniel came face to face with the fearsome Shawnee war chief, Black Fish. The chief was leading a war party, and Daniel learned of his intent to capture Boonesborough. With his quick thinking, Daniel offered himself and the other men at the river as prisoners. They would surrender willingly, which meant the Indians could catch a nice reward from the British. Tribes often got paid by the British for bringing in rebellious frontier settlers.

Daniel convinced Black Fish to hold off on attacking the fort, and the chief settled for taking the salt-making party instead. The Shawnee surrounded the men at the river, and Daniel was able to persuade his people to go along with the surrender rather than risk their families' lives back at the fort.

The Indian tribe marched them north to Ohio. When word reached Boonesborough, the settlers were devastated. Many of their leaders, husbands, and fathers were gone. They could only assume the worst had happened, and that they were all dead. Rebecca Boone decided to take five of her children and move back to North Carolina. Jemima, however, remained at the fort, determined to be there when her father returned.

Meanwhile, Daniel was very much alive and plotting his escape.



On the Edge of Escape

Chillicothe, Ohio, June 1778.

It had been five months. Five months of living, working, and hunting with the Shawnee. Every day, Daniel looked for an opportunity to escape, but with no luck. The Shawnee were smart, and they were watching him. But Daniel was watching them, too.

Last week, he'd seen the warriors gather and paint their faces for war. Black Fish was clearly preparing for his attack on Fort Boonesborough. How soon they would set out, he didn't know, but he needed to escape and warn his family. They were all in danger. If the Shawnee reached the fort, it would surely be overrun.

But how would he get away without being suspicious?



Black Fish emerged from his tent, along with some of his most trusted men. He looked serious, and when their eyes met across the camp, Daniel immediately regretted it. The chief pointed at him and then at his tent.

Daniel gulped. *This can't be good.*

When he entered the chief's tent, it smelled of heavy incense and fresh face paint. Black Fish rolled up his maps and tucked them away. "Sheltowee," the chief said. It was Daniel's Indian name, which meant "Big Turtle." He'd proven himself enough to earn the Shawnee's respect, but not their trust. He was part of their "family," but he would never belong.

"I need you to feed an army," Black Fish said. He was watching him closely, and Daniel felt like it was a test.

"Of course," he replied in the chief's native tongue. "I'll bring your warriors a feast. I'll set out to hunt at dawn tomorrow."

"You know the rules. You can't go alone," Black Fish said.

Daniel nodded. Satisfied, the chief dismissed him. Outside the tent, Daniel breathed a sigh of relief. Getting the chief's permission to hunt would help him escape, but that was the easy part. The hard part was figuring out how to get away without being noticed.

The next morning, just before dawn, Daniel set out with nothing but the clothes on his back and a gun. He waited for an opening to sneak past the scouts. It was now or never. He could either accept the situation he'd been dealt or risk everything to save his family and friends' lives on the frontier.

Scanning the treeline once more, he made his choice. He broke into a run and didn't look back.

Daniel had spent plenty of time living true to his Indian name... slow and patient as a turtle. Now, it was time to race as fast as his legs would carry him home to his real family.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

APPALACHIAN WEAPONRY & TECHNOLOGY



LONG RIFLE

A flintlock firearm famous for accuracy and range. In the days of Boone, these weapons were essential for both hunting and defense. Boone's version stretched 5 feet and weighed nearly 11 pounds.



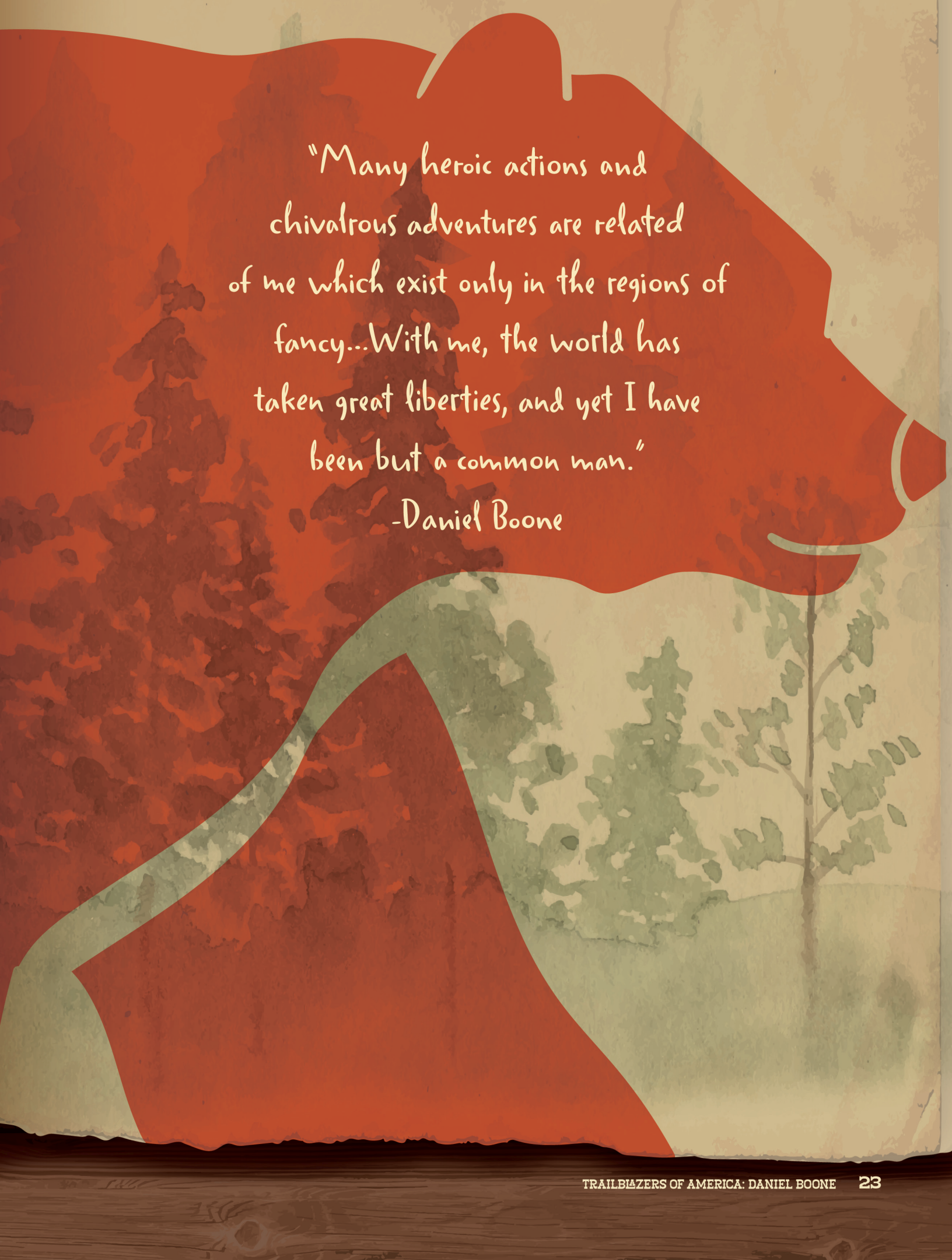
SHAWNEE TOMAHAWK

These versatile weapons were used by both Indians and explorers and were useful in war or while hunting. The Shawnee version was especially effective in hand-to-hand combat, and today is the most popular version of tomahawks used in throwing competitions.



POWDER HORN

A container for gunpowder, generally made from cow, ox, or buffalo horn. Boone used these to load his rifle and pistols.


"Many heroic actions and
chivalrous adventures are related
of me which exist only in the regions of
fancy...With me, the world has
taken great liberties, and yet I have
been but a common man."
-Daniel Boone

A Siege on the Settlement

Daniel successfully escaped the Shawnees, and the brave frontiersman covered over 160 miles in four days, eating and drinking little along the way. It was a feat of incredible endurance.

He arrived back at Boonesborough, to the surprise of the remaining settlers. However, surprise and joy quickly turned to urgency as he warned them of a coming attack.

Preparations began in earnest to protect the fort. Supplies were gathered, gunpowder was made, and reinforcements were applied to the walls. As the summer went on, though, and no Indian attack came, the settlers went back to normal life.



Daniel knew better, though. He continued to watch and scout. Things were too quiet... until, finally, he tracked a large movement of Indians into their area. Racing back to the fort from his scouting mission, he warned the settlers to make the final preparations.

The Indian forces made no effort to hide their arrival and made camp around the settlement. The Shawnee greatly outnumbered the settlers, 400 strong to 60 fighting men inside the fort. Black Fish presented Daniel with a note from the British detailing the terms of surrender. Since Daniel had earlier promised the surrender of the fort, Black Fish hoped for an easy win. Daniel weighed the options with the settlers, but they were determined to fight it out. Some were even suspicious of Daniel's openness to surrender, wondering if he had betrayed them to the British.

The settlers agreed to negotiations for a truce, but only to buy more time since they expected reinforcements to arrive from nearby Virginia. However, on the last day of negotiations, as the two sides were ready to shake on the agreement, a scuffle broke out. Shots were fired on both sides and on September 7, 1778, the **siege** on Boonesborough began.

Though records vary, the siege lasted eleven or twelve days. The settlers ran low on food and water, and they regretted not finishing the well they had started building in the summer. They suffered from lack of sleep and constant fear as they defended against every attack. Meanwhile, the Indians tried everything they could, from firing flaming arrows to digging a tunnel to burrow under the fort. However, with the recent rains, most fires didn't take hold, and the tunnel collapsed from the wet dirt.

The Indians finally retreated, and the settlers could open their gates once more. Their perseverance and unyielding attitude won out. Reinforcements arrived too late, but they were able to help the settlers clean up the aftermath. It was a significant win on the frontier, and some historians believe that had Fort Boonesborough fallen, all the other early settlements in Kentucky might have fallen, too.

Boone's Final Frontier

After the siege, Daniel was **court-martialed** for treason. Despite all his efforts to protect and defend the fort, settlers didn't trust his relationship with the Native Americans. Between his living with the Shawnee for months and his **leniency** toward negotiating with them before the siege, many thought he was a traitor. All claims were dismissed, however, and Daniel went to North Carolina to reunite with his family and bring them back to Kentucky once more. He'd promised them a better life, and with Boonesborough secured, Daniel was determined to seize opportunity again on the frontier.

Daniel pursued many business ventures in Kentucky. He settled a new community called **Boone's Station** and spent his time hunting, **surveying** land, and even running a tavern for a time. As it turned out, Daniel was a much better hunter than businessman. He lost most of his land claims and went into significant debt.

The nation saw a major turning point in 1783, with their victory in the American Revolution against the British. With their independence secured, settlers flooded to the West, and Kentucky became much too crowded for Daniel's liking. In 1799, he, his family, and some friends decided to move south to Missouri, which was outside the United States at the time. The area was controlled by the Spanish, but it wasn't very populated. Daniel was able to get a land claim for 850 acres. Unfortunately, when Missouri was purchased by the U.S. in the early 1800s, Daniel lost his claim to the land.

"Curiosity is natural to the soul of man and interesting objects have a powerful influence on our affections."

—Daniel Boone

Daniel spent his latter days living with one of his sons, Nathan. He continued hunting as much as his health allowed and enjoyed time with his children and grandchildren. Known for his peaceful attitude and respect toward the Indians, he even helped settle disputes between the Natives and settlers in the area. Despite not achieving much in the way of financial success, in the end, he held onto what truly mattered: his family. As long as they were together and there was land to hunt on, he was content. After 56 years of marriage, his wife Rebecca died in 1813. Daniel himself lived to be 85 years old—quite an achievement in his day. He passed the threshold into his final frontier in September 1820. At the end of his long journey, he was laid to rest and buried with Rebecca.



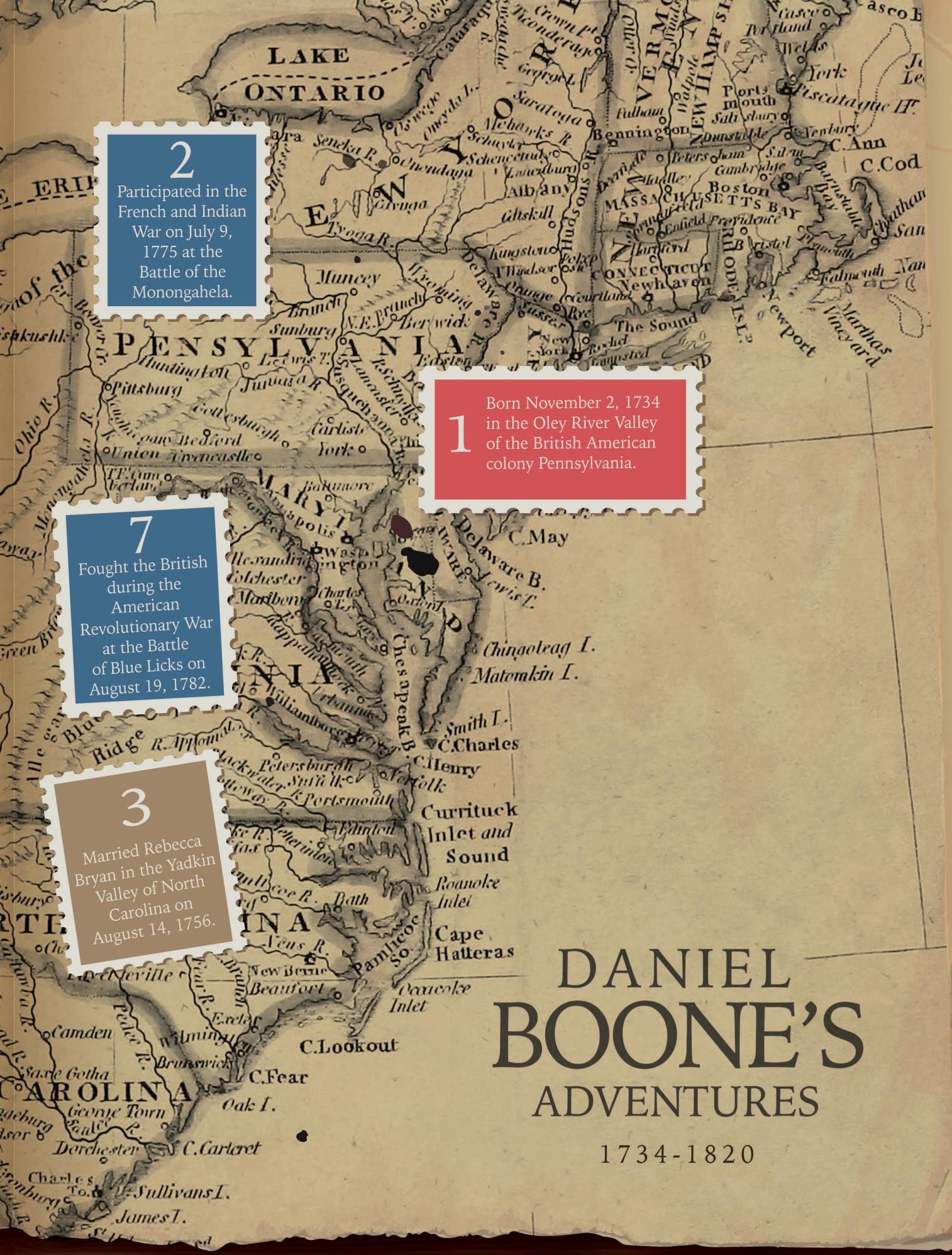


6 Kidnapped by Shawnee Indians on February 7, 1778 and taken as a prisoner to their lands in the Ohio Territory.

5 The settlement of Boonesborough was established on September 8, 1775.

4 From 1767 to 1775 explored the lands around the Cumberland Gap and led a team clearing the Wilderness Road.

8 From 1799 until his death in 1820, lived in, and explored the lands of Missouri.



2
Participated in the French and Indian War on July 9, 1775 at the Battle of the Monongahela.

1
Born November 2, 1734 in the Oley River Valley of the British American colony Pennsylvania.

7
Fought the British during the American Revolutionary War at the Battle of Blue Licks on August 19, 1782.

3
Married Rebecca Bryan in the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina on August 14, 1756.

DANIEL BOONE'S ADVENTURES

1734-1820

Frontiersman to Folk Hero

Fort Boonesborough, early 1780s.

"Mr. Boone? I asked you a question."

Daniel blinked. The man sitting across from him had stopped writing. He wasn't sure why he agreed to this interview—he certainly felt that John Filson was writing an awful lot down even though he hadn't said much.

"I'm sorry, what was your question?" Daniel asked.

"I asked if you're satisfied with how Boonesborough turned out. After all, Mr. Henderson assigned you a great undertaking when you first set out."

The knock on his door seemed a lifetime ago. So much had happened since he set out for Kentucky with all those men. Rebecca's words came rushing back. *I know you will never be satisfied until you explore every nook and cranny of those wild lands.*

Daniel smiled. "Am I satisfied? We shall see. My curiosities and explorations are far from over."

"That's good, that's good..." Filson was writing quickly.

"And are you satisfied, Mr. Filson, with the answers I've given?" Daniel replied. "I'm afraid I don't see how you can write very much about an ordinary man such as myself."

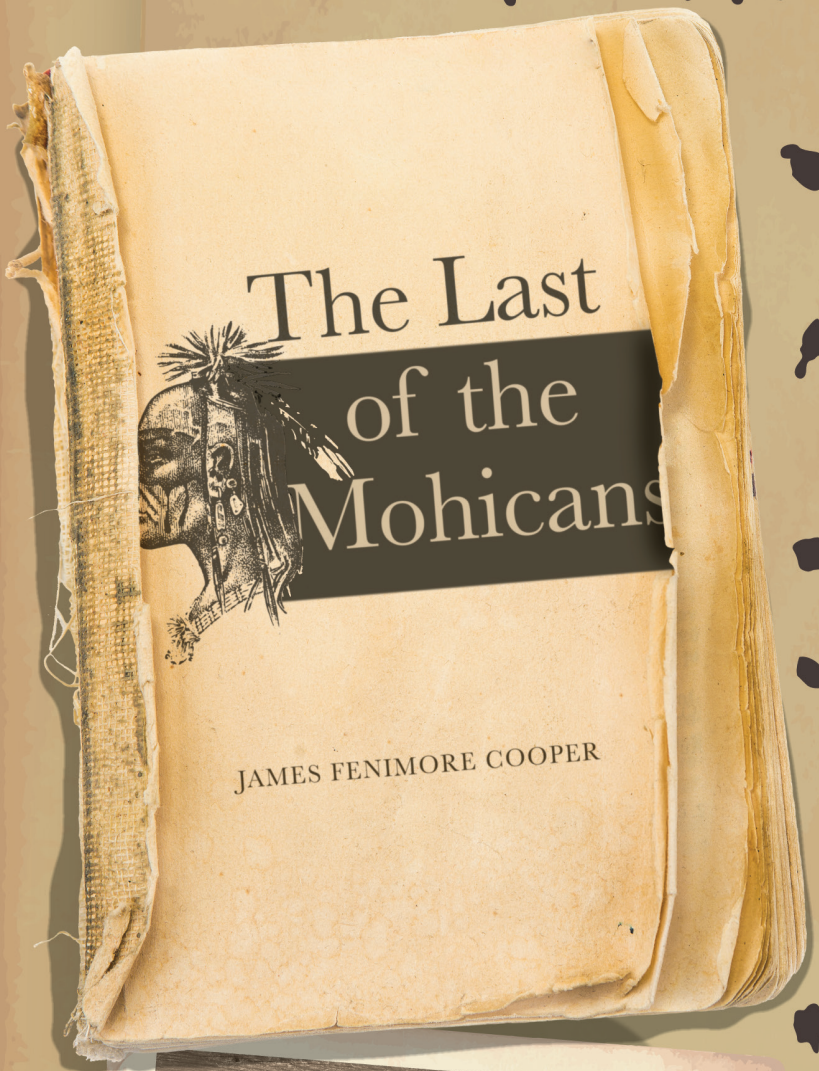
Filson paused. "Don't sell yourself short, Mr. Boone. Many of our greatest heroes also began as quite ordinary men."

These stories were later published by John Filson in "The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon[e]." Though much of what Daniel shared was embellished and made to be larger than life, they were based on real conversations Boone had with Filson. Whether truth or fiction, the tales made Daniel famous in his lifetime.

From frontiersman to one of history's favorite folk heroes, Daniel Boone made his own path in life. The American frontier was a tough place that offered a difficult life, but where others saw obstacles and danger, Daniel saw beauty and a land of promise.

In true American spirit, he didn't settle for the life he was dealt but fought for the life he believed his family, and countless other settlers, were destined to have. He accepted the call to adventure, with all its perils, not for man or money, but for something of much greater value: freedom.

Interesting Facts





- Though legend has it that Daniel Boone often wore a raccoon hat, he actually preferred a beaver hat.
- In classic literature, *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper is said to include a fictionalized version of Boone's rescue of his daughter Jemima from her kidnappers.
- Boone was able to see Kentucky become a state within his lifetime, on June 1, 1792.
- Boone's primary weapon for hunting was a Pennsylvania (or Kentucky) Long Rifle. He famously named his "Old Tick Licker." The name implied that he could shoot a tick off an animal without causing it any harm, which added to frontier lore about his hunting skills.
- Boone and his wife Rebecca had 10 children and 68 grandchildren. During their time, America's birth rate was one of the highest ever recorded in any country, with the average woman having at least seven children.

Writing Task

What can you learn from Daniel Boone's life as a frontiersman?

What skills, experiences, or qualities did he have that helped him face the challenges of his day?

Glossary

Appalachian Mountains: The largest mountain range in the eastern United States. It spans from Canada down to central Alabama, almost 2,000 miles. It was a historic barrier to westward expansion during colonial times.

Boone's Station: A second settlement established by Daniel Boone in Kentucky during the winter of 1779-1780.

Court-Martial: A court that tries military members for breaking military law.

Cumberland Gap: A natural pass in the Cumberland Mountains, within the Appalachian Mountain range. It's near the intersection of the borders of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Forage: To search for food or supplies in the wild.

Fort Boonesborough: One of the earliest colonial settlements in Kentucky. It was founded by and named for Daniel Boone.

French and Indian War: The North American portion of the global Seven Years' War, fought from 1754-1763. The British colonies defeated the French and gained lands, including those between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River.

Frontier: Untamed wilderness beyond settled land.

"Ken-te-ke": A possible origin for the name of the area now known as Kentucky. Several theories exist, including Ken-te-ke or Kain Tuck, meaning "meadowland" or "at the head of the river." Another claim is that it stems from the Native American word meaning "land of tomorrow."

Lenient: Not being as strict or severe as expected. Showing tolerance or mercy toward someone.

Livelihood: How someone makes a living. This often refers to the job or means by which a person makes money to buy their daily necessities.

Proclamation Line of 1763: A British produced boundary, marked in the Appalachian Mountains, that prohibited Anglo-American colonists from settling on lands westward.

Salt Lick: A place where salt naturally gathers, and animals go there to lick the salt and get the minerals they need.

Siege: A military attack method in which an armed force tries to take over a fortified city or town. The main tactic of a siege is cutting off the supplies to the city or town in the hopes of forcing those inside to surrender.

Survey: To map or measure out land for the purpose of selling it to private owners from the state or crown.

Transylvania Company: A land company owned by Richard Henderson, with the goal of purchasing land in the areas of Ohio, Kentucky, and the Cumberland Rivers. Henderson used this company to purchase land from the Cherokee Indians, which Daniel Boone was then hired to settle.

Wilderness Road: A path Daniel Boone helped create which allowed people to travel through the Appalachian Mountains to reach Kentucky.

Sources

"Daniel Boone." *New World Encyclopedia*, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Daniel_Boone. Accessed 25 April 2024.

"Daniel Boone." *Tennessee State Library and Archives*, sharetngov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/myth/danielboone.htm#:~:text=%E2%80%9CMany%20heroic%20actions%20and%20chivalrous,been%20but%20a%20common%20man.%E2%80%9D. Accessed 25 April 2024.

Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Daniel Boone." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 18 Apr 2024, www.britannica.com/biography/Daniel-Boone. Accessed 25 April 2024.

Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Westward Movement." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/event/westward-movement. Accessed 25 April 2024.

Farmer, Bill. "Daniel Boone and The History of Fort Boonesborough." *Fort Boonesborough Living History*, www.fortboonesborough-livinghistory.org/html/daniel_boone.html. Accessed 25 April 2024.

Friends of Boone Trace, Inc. "Fort Boonesborough." *ExploreKYHistory*. https://explorekyhistory.ky.gov/items/show/409. Accessed 25 April 2024.

Hurt, R. Douglas. "Daniel Boone (1734–1820)." *Missouri Encyclopedia*, 21 Dec 2022, missouriencyclopedia.org/people/boone-daniel. Accessed 25 April 2024.

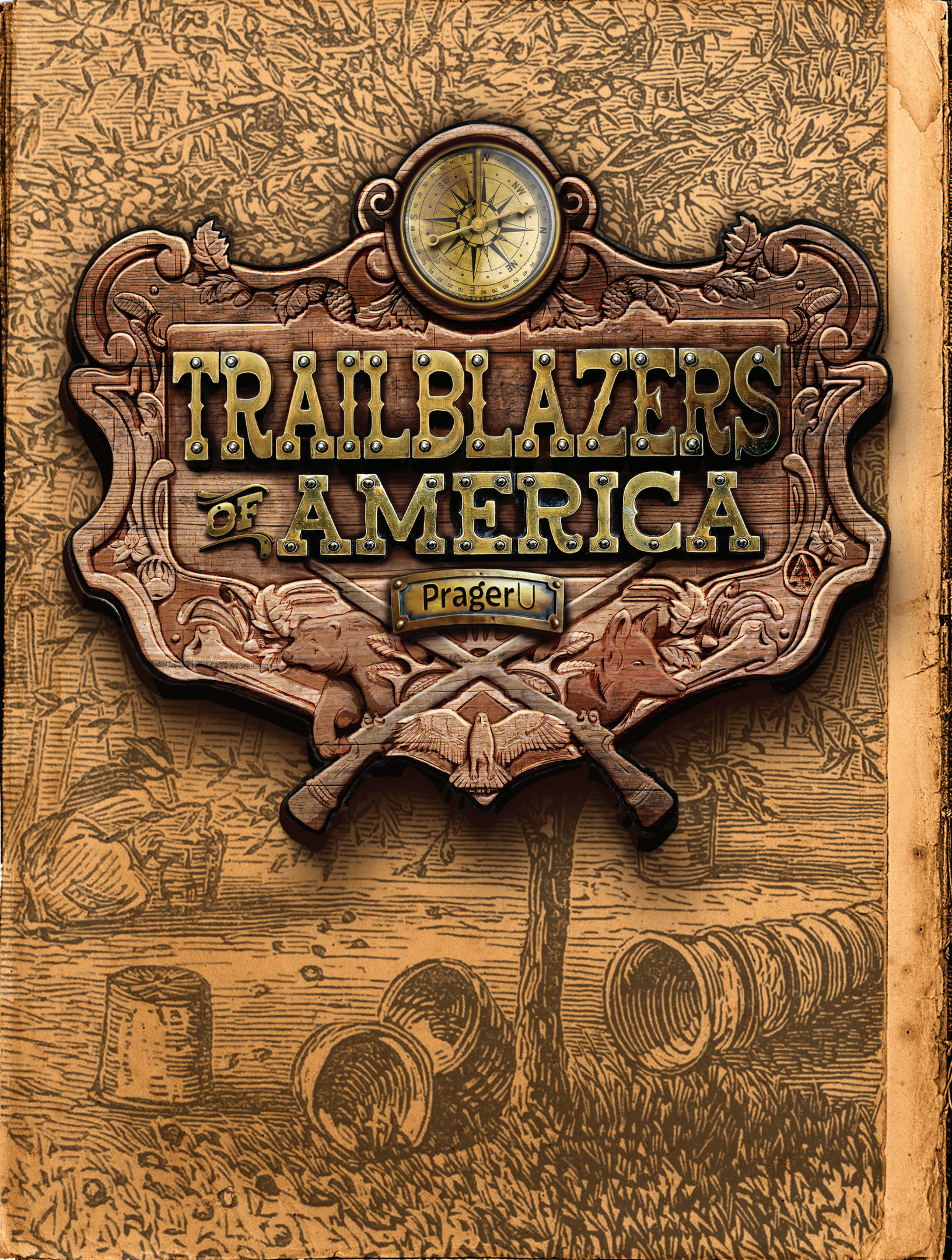
"Old Tick Licker." *Olde Wood Limited*, 4 Aug 2015, www.oldewoodltd.com/blog/old-tick-licker#:~:text=When%20Boone%20was%20only%20twelve,Pennsylvania%20or%20Kentucky%20Long%20Rifle. Accessed 25 April 2024.

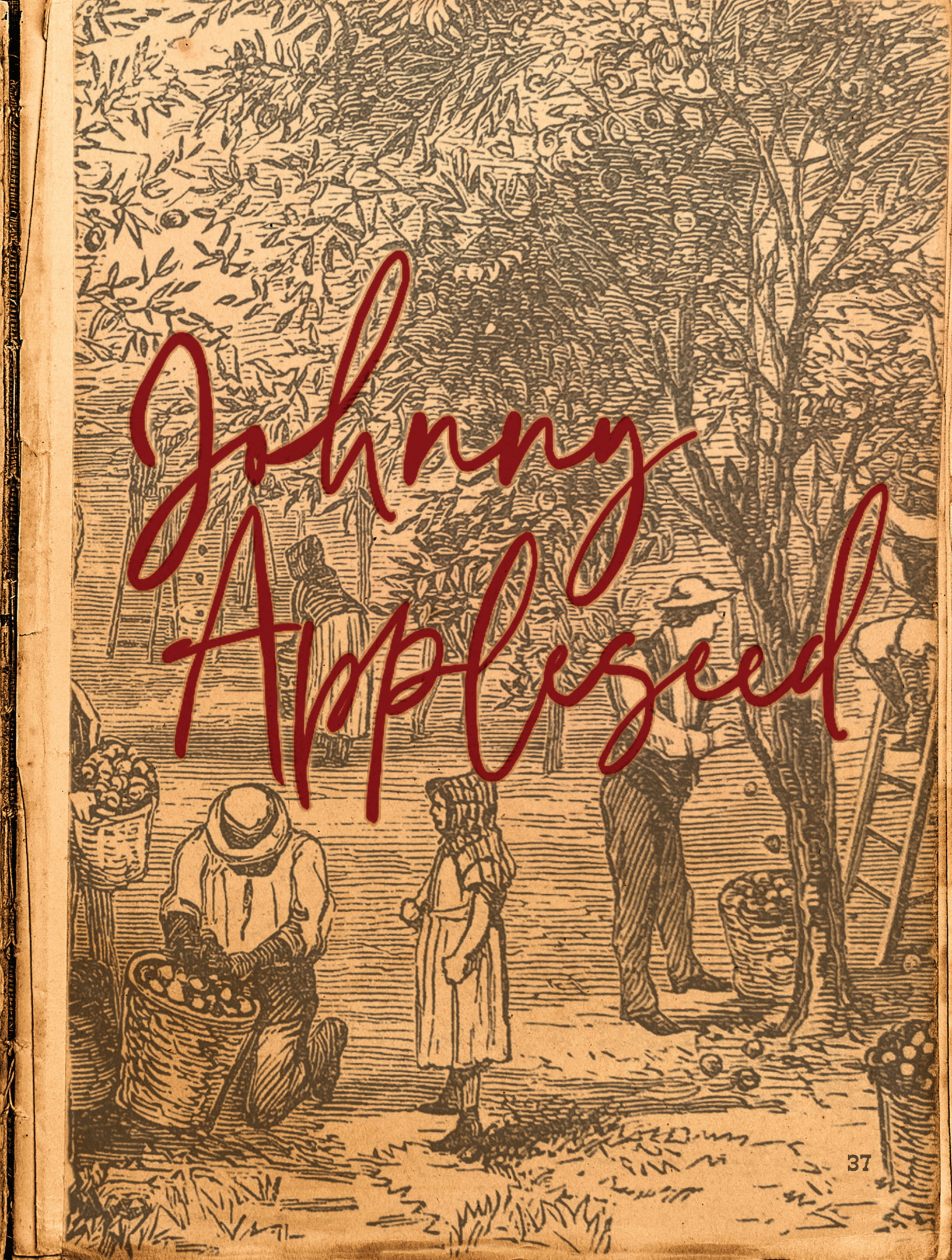
"Proclamation Line of 1763." *George Washington's Mount Vernon*, www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/proclamation-line-of-1763/. Accessed 25 April 2024.

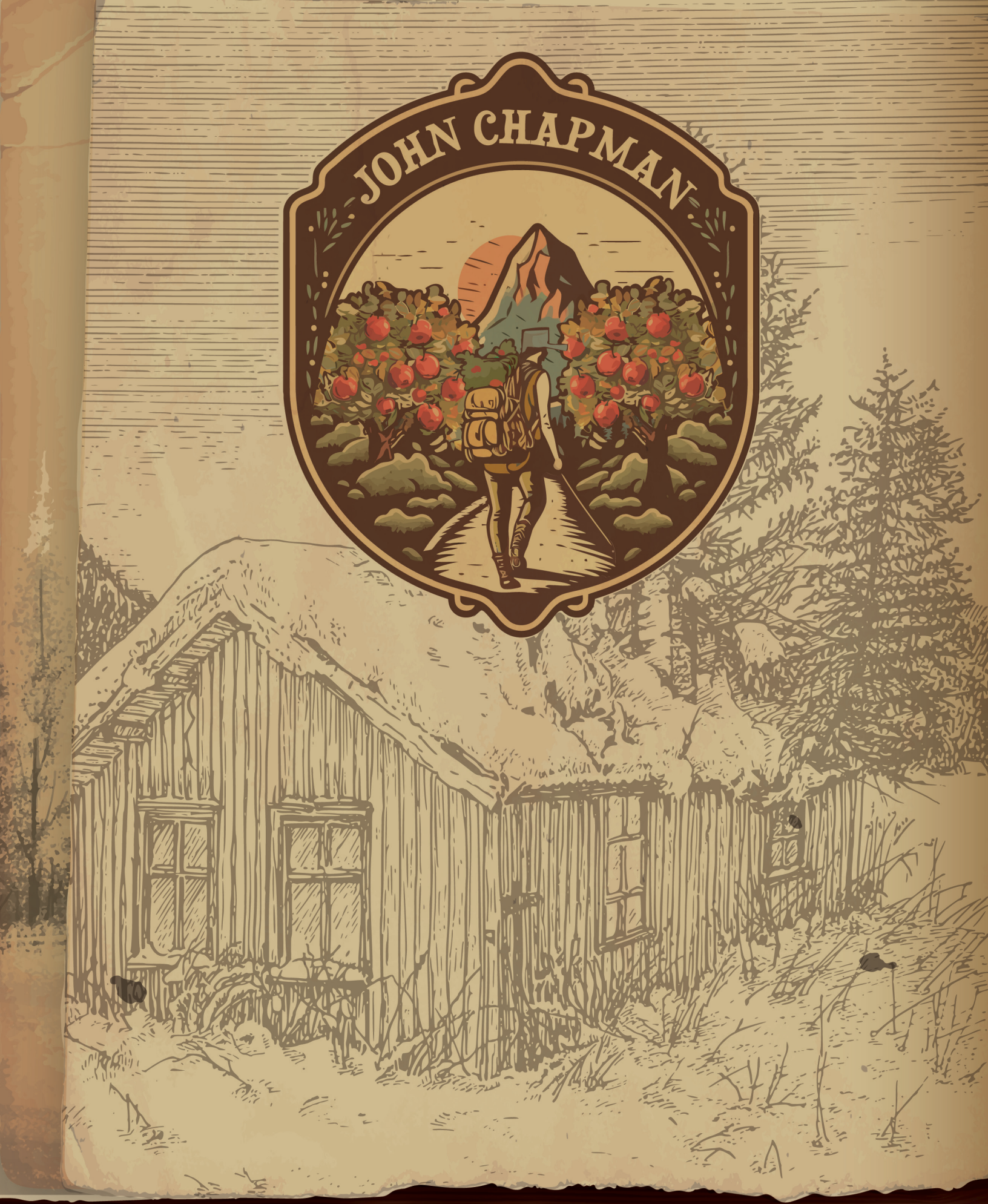
Talbott, Tim. "Boone's Station." *ExploreKYHistory*. https://explorekyhistory.ky.gov/items/show/717. Accessed 25 April 2024.

"The Capture of the Salt Makers." *NPS History: A History of the Daniel Boone National Forest*, http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/region/8/daniel-boone/history/chap15.htm. Accessed 25 April 2024.

"The Great Siege of Boonesborough." *NPS History: A History of the Daniel Boone National Forest*, npshistory.com/publications/usfs/region/8/daniel-boone/history/chap16.htm. Accessed 25 April 2024.


TRAILBLAZERS
OF AMERICA
PragerU


Johnny
Appleseed


JOHN CHAPMAN

Arrival

Near Olean, New York, Winter 1797



With careful steps, John Chapman climbed the snowbank. The icy wind nipped his ears, his brow, the tip of his nose. When he saw the far-off cabin—a brown square with snow on the roof and a stone chimney—he broke into a grin.

Finally, he thought, pulling the thin cloak tighter. John turned and called back to his half-brother, Nathaniel, who was only twelve.

When the two left their house in Massachusetts a year ago, they had no idea the family hideaway in the mountains would be this hard to reach. They'd walked a long way on foot, but the brushes with hunger and freezing cold had not slowed them down—just the opposite. Here, with the bleached mountains, the wind, and the promise of cheap land due west, John's heart was soaring.

Nathaniel coughed next to him. "Is that it? Did we reach the cabin?"

John nodded. Hearing Nathaniel shiver brought a hollow feeling to his stomach. *Could they both make it?* Having pushed this far into the **frontier**, could he and Nathaniel survive in such a harsh place? Some rest and a warm, crackling fire would help. After that, and if they could hang on until spring, they would keep moving.

"Come on," John said, staggering forward.

Hundreds of winters later, Americans know John Chapman by a different name—Johnny Appleseed. Today, he's a legend of history and a symbol of America's pioneering spirit.





Meet Johnny Appleseed



Much of Johnny Appleseed's story is a **tall tale**, but not all of it. Bare facts paint the picture of a man who lived outdoors, helped others by planting apple trees, and bravely explored the frontier. With his **entrepreneurial spirit**, this man inspired the legend through everyday action.

Long before he became "Appleseed John" (as some first called him), John Chapman was part of a large family. He was born on September 26 in 1774, almost two years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. His father, Nathaniel, fought in the Revolution, and his mother, Elizabeth, died when he was young. After his father remarried, the family grew with ten more children—including his half-brother Nathaniel. By the time John and Nathaniel left for the frontier, everyone had been living in a house no bigger than a small modern apartment!

Thinking of cheap land and probably eager for more elbow room, the half-brothers joined a wave of people heading for the **Northwest Territory**. In the thick of a freezing cold winter, John and Nathaniel struggled over the rough **Allegheny** Mountains to the family's tiny cabin. Reports of newcomers securing free land in Ohio's hills and valleys sounded too good to be true. To young men like them, the unsettled frontier meant freedom. Opportunity. A chance to build the future you wanted... as long as you could survive the winter.

Frontier Facts:

In the early 1800s, the unpopulated frontier included modern-day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. By 1840, about seven million people (or forty percent of America's population) were living in this region.

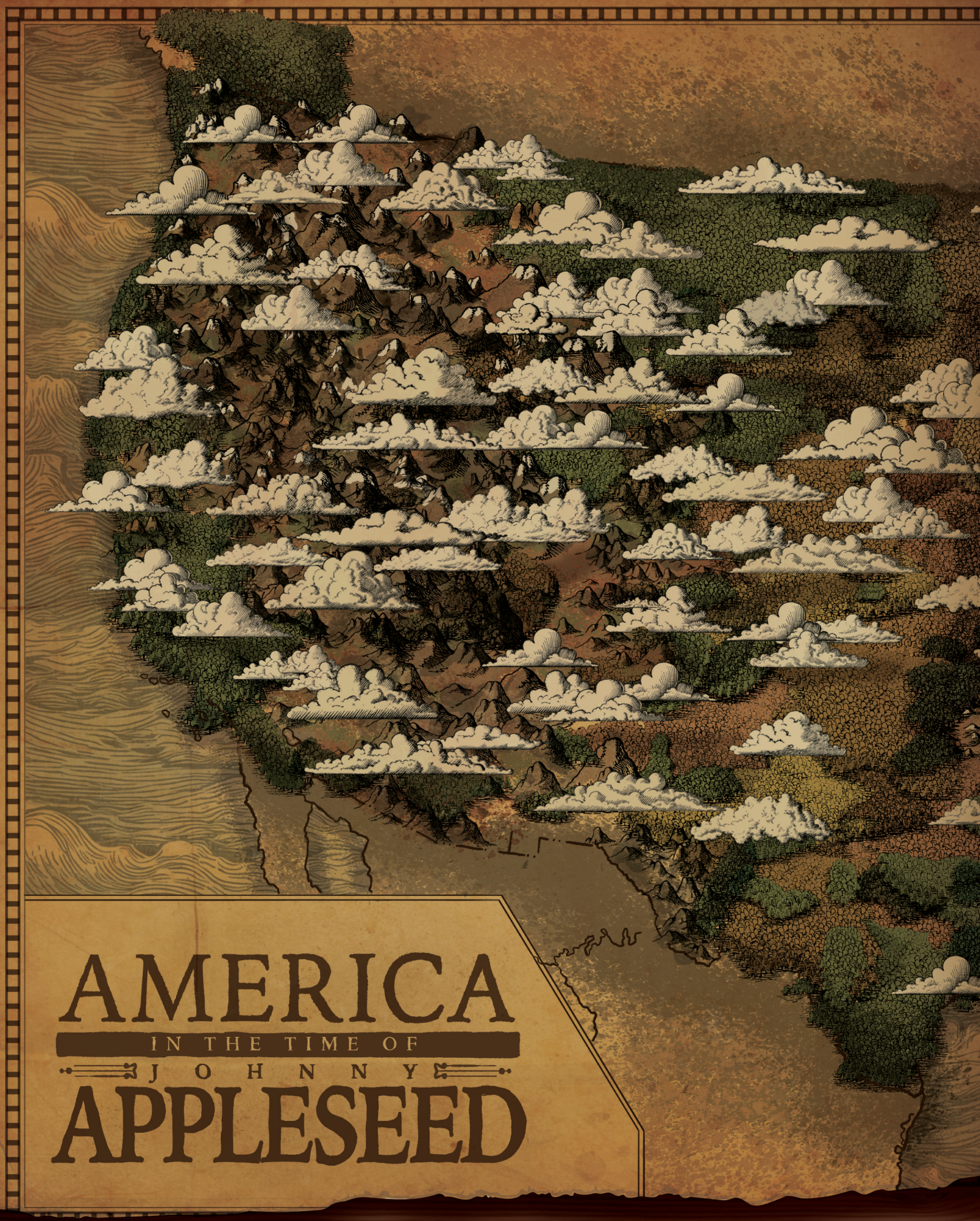
Right before John was born, the **Ohio Company** started offering settlers a hundred free acres in the "Donation Tract" (Central Ohio). To claim their land, settlers had three years to plant fifty apple trees and twenty peach trees.

Life on the frontier was hard and dangerous. In that time period, boys were often married by age seventeen and girls by age fourteen. Men had a **life expectancy** of thirty-four years old.

One out of every four children on the frontier died before the age of twenty-one. Diseases like smallpox, malaria, and scarlet fever were common. Areas as big as three million acres often had only one trained doctor.

To treat pain or illness, people like John Chapman turned to plants.

- Catnip for stomach ache.
- Fennel for indigestion.
- Horehound for coughs or a cold.
- Mullein for a sore throat.
- Pennyroyal to help women giving birth.
- Rattlesnake root for—you guessed it—snakebites.
- Water from creeks and rivers made people sick. To stay hydrated, people drank whiskey or alcoholic cider made from apples.


AMERICA
IN THE TIME OF
JOHNNY
APPLESEED


VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON
NEW YORK
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
NEW YORK CITY
NEW JERSEY
PHILADELPHIA
PENNSYLVANIA
DELAWARE
D.C.
MARYLAND
VIRGINIA
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON
GEORGIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
WISCONSIN TERRITORY
MICHIGAN
DETROIT
CHICAGO
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
OHIO
OHIO RIVER
KENTUCKY
ST. LOUIS
TENNESSEE
FORT BOONESBOROUGH
CUMBERLAND GAP
Appalachian Mountains
Appalachian Mountains

Frontier Businessman

The brothers survived... *barely*. Nathaniel almost starved, and it's possible that passing Indians saved his life. A few years later, John Chapman walked into a **general store** in western Pennsylvania. The store's record tells us that two young men made several purchases that year. They might have been living along the nearby creek where some think John planted his first apple tree **nursery**.

When the rest of the family came out to Ohio, Nathaniel joined them—but John kept going. For the rest of his life, he explored the rugged frontier without settling down. When the frontier moved through Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, John moved with it. Wherever he went, he planted, bought land, and **bartered** seeds and trees for goods he needed. Influenced by the teachings of **Emanuel Swedenborg**, he shared his Christian faith with everyone he met.

The "Appleseed" nickname stuck because John always carried seeds with him. In a region where raising apple and peach trees secured the ownership of land, seeds were **start-up capital**. By planting and selling apple trees in areas where settlers were arriving, John filled an important need.

Over time, helping newcomers survive and hang on to their land became his calling card. The rumors of his kindness, outdoor skills, and unusual appearance grew as tall as the trees he planted.

Why Apples?



Here's why apple orchards were so important on the frontier:

Settlers could use them to claim land. Planting and growing orchards for five years was a common part of a land contract. It showed that someone was serious about **cultivating** a piece of land.

Apples were a key ingredient. On the frontier, people used them to make vinegar, cider for drinking, and products like apple butter. With little **hard currency**, people traded goods, products, and even apple trees for other supplies.

Apple cider was safe to drink. Cider, like most alcohol, has disinfectant properties that kill bacteria. People on the frontier knew that drinking cider was safer than drinking water from creeks or streams.

Apples grown directly from seeds were not usually eaten. The trees that John planted produced small, bitter apples that people mashed up for cider. Some called these apples "spitters" because of their taste.

Apple trees could be grafted to produce sweet fruit. To grow edible fruit, settlers **grafted** trees. That means they joined an upper, mature part of a fruit-bearing tree (called a *scion*) to the lower part of another tree (called the *rootstock*). When the two parts grew together, the tree would produce the same variety of fruit as the upper part.

Orchards reminded settlers of home. The frontier was wild and dangerous, but apple orchards reminded people of New England.

Apples were "nature's toothbrush." Before toothbrushes were common, it was believed that eating something crunchy and fibrous like an apple could help clean your teeth.

A Familiar Name

Jacob's Creek, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Fall 1806

Slop, slop, slop.

William rubbed his eyes and looked again. In the middle of the heaps of mashed apple pulp, a lean, scrawny man was sitting cross-legged. Both of his hands were wrist-deep in a pile of pulp, and when he moved them around, the *slop, slop* resumed.

As William crept closer, he saw that the young man had bare, **calloused** feet and rags for clothes. He could be no more than twenty-five. With long, wild hair, a mossy beard, and caked dirt all over his back, he looked homeless. Had he been living outdoors? William noticed the half-full burlap sack. Every so often, people stopped to pick through the mill's trash for unused apple seeds.

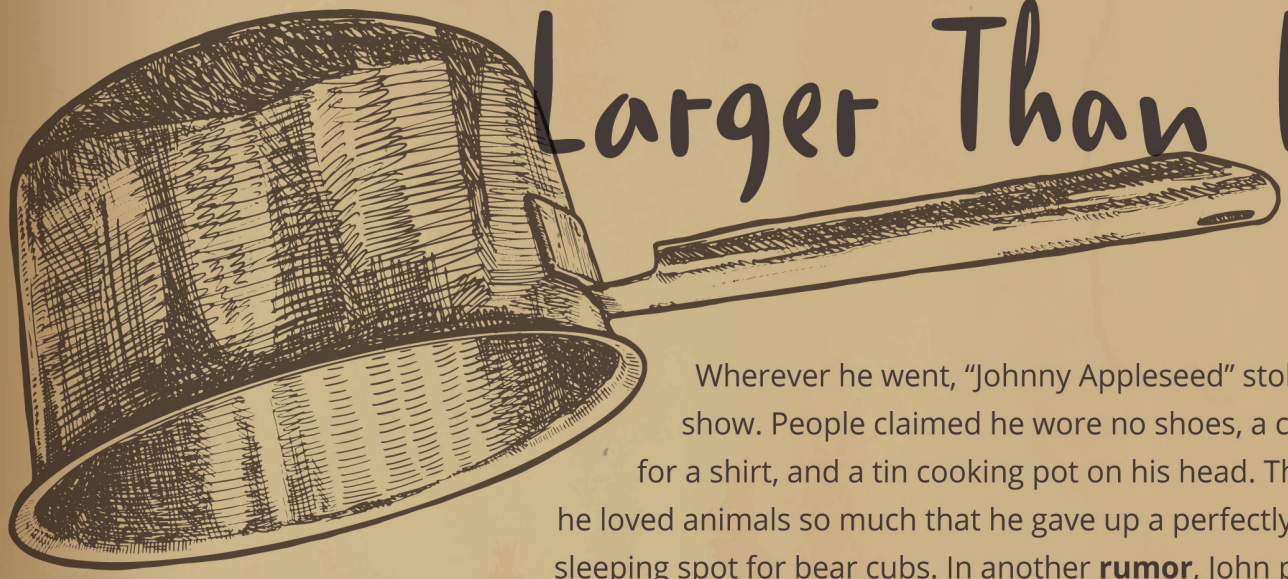
When the young man stood, his clothes hung loose. He slung the sack over his shoulder and picked up a young **sapling** with its roots tied in a sack.

"I'm John," he said, handing the sapling over. "For your trouble."

They shook hands. William did not recognize him, and yet the calm voice, gentle eyes, and rugged appearance seemed familiar. *Was this the man they called Appleseed John?*

"I've heard about you," William said. "You're the one who sleeps outdoors and protects animals. Indians think you're a medicine man. That true?"

"Sure," the young man chuckled. "Want to hear a story?"



Larger Than Life

Wherever he went, "Johnny Appleseed" stole the show. People claimed he wore no shoes, a coffee sack for a shirt, and a tin cooking pot on his head. They said he loved animals so much that he gave up a perfectly good sleeping spot for bear cubs. In another **rumor**, John put out his evening campfire so the mosquitos would not fly into it.



John's love for animals was one **conviction** people found strange. As a Swedenborg follower, he believed God's presence rested in all living things. He would not fight, carry a weapon, or cut trees to grow better apples. These beliefs probably raised eyebrows, but people respected John for living them out.

With the land as his home, John's endurance was remarkable. He even won respect from the skilled Indian warriors living in the Great Lakes Region. Unlike settlers who dealt with the frontier's harshness by getting drunk or violent, John's gentleness was a shining example. Being tough and self-reliant allowed him to be generous. Sometimes, when a person could not pay for his seeds or trees, he gave them away for free.

For a man who could walk ten or twenty miles alone, John still loved company. He preached the Bible wherever he went, but he also told whopping stories about himself. To entertain children, he gave out ribbons and stuck pins in his calloused feet.

In a place full of wild characters, it's incredible that a peaceful **evangelist** became such a legend.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

GREAT LAKES ANIMALS





RATTLESNAKE RATTLE



RATTLESNAKE FANGS

GREAT LAKES RATTLER

A dark-colored rattlesnake native to the Great Lakes region. The snake is now endangered, possibly because hunters were once paid a bounty for killing them. When people heard that Johnny Appleseed felt no pain when a snake bit his foot, they probably pictured this rattler.



BOBCAT TRACKS









WOLVERINE TRACKS

WOLVERINE

A fierce, brown-furred weasel. Wolverines are lonesome scavengers who feed on berries, plants, and carrion (dead, rotting animals). They can also hunt large prey like deer and moose.

BOBCAT

A slender, spotted "wild cat." Nocturnal and adaptable, bobcats hunt rabbits, chickens, geese, and small rodents within their territory.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

GREAT LAKES PLANTS



BLUE VIOLET

A colorful blue or lilac flower that grows throughout the Great Lakes region. Since 1908, the blue violet has been the state flower of Illinois.





SUGAR MAPLE

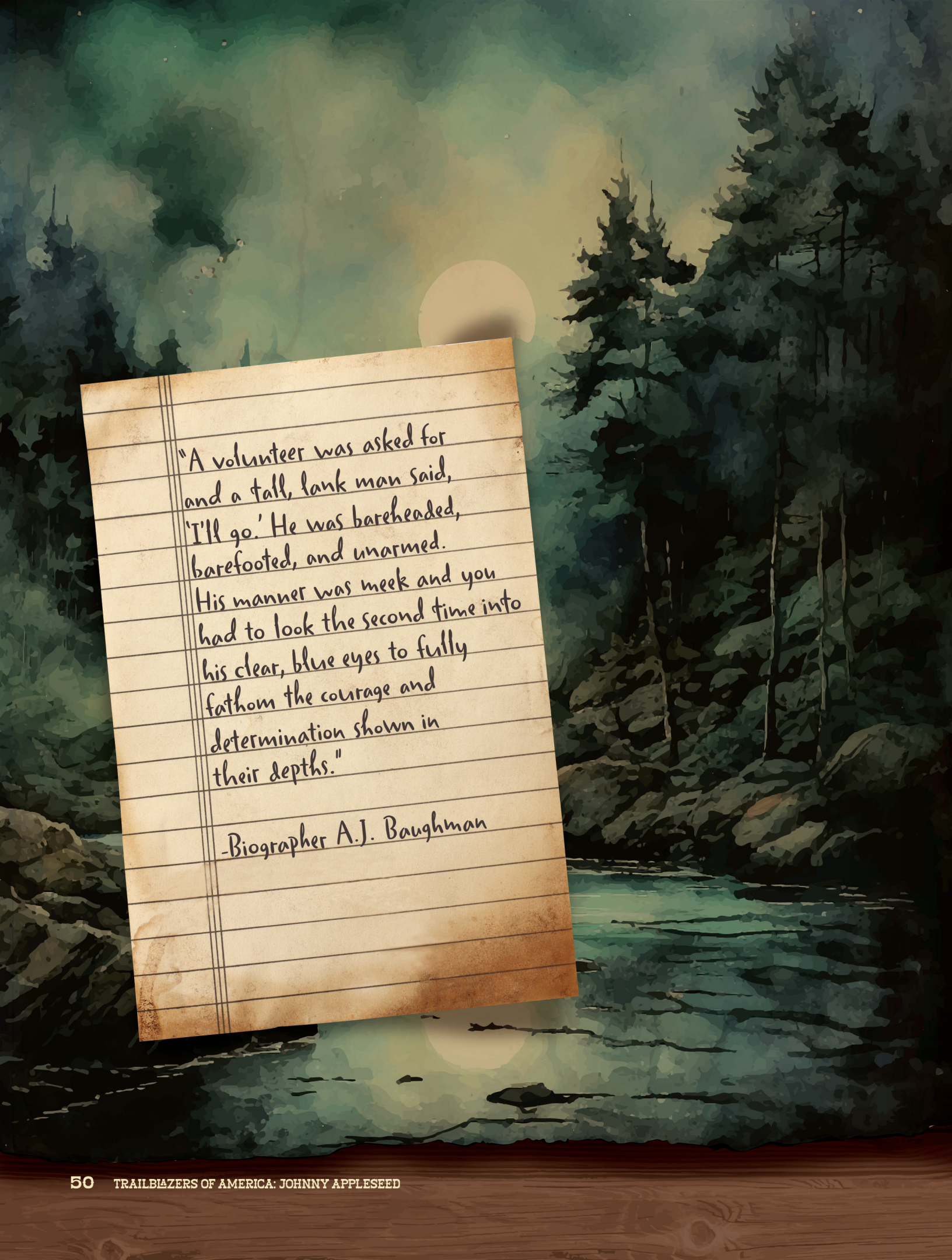
A thin, well-loved tree of the Great Lakes and the Northeast. Sugar maple leaves turn brilliant shades of yellow and orange in the fall. Canadians love them for the sticky, sugary product made from their sap: maple syrup.





MICHIGAN WHITE PINE

Michigan's state tree is a majestic one. Tall and stately, the white pine is covered in green needles that deer and other animals love to munch, especially in winter.


"A volunteer was asked for and a tall, lank man said, 'I'll go.' He was bareheaded, barefooted, and unarmed. His manner was meek and you had to look the second time into his clear, blue eyes to fully fathom the courage and determination shown in their depths."
-Biographer A.J. Baughman

Fly For Your Lives!



Near Mount Vernon, Ohio, September 1812

When he heard whispering, John crept off the trail.

Who was this? British scouts? Bandits? A pair of Tecumseh's feared **Shawnee** warriors? In the thick darkness, John could not tell.

He heard footsteps. The voices on the trail were now talking.

He pressed his face against the rough hide of an oak tree, making himself so narrow nobody could spot him. His lungs were on fire, but John held his breath. The past three hours of running, wading through creeks, and knocking on cabin doors to warn people were a heavy blur. He kept thinking of the men he'd spoken to before accepting the task. Men gathered outside with torches, faces glowing with worry. *Mount Vernon*, they'd said. *Someone has to warn Captain Douglas the British forces are coming... and that the Indians are out for revenge.*

When the talking died down, John peeked around.

Moving was risky... but he *had* to keep going.

Marathon Man

One evening in September of 1812, John Chapman volunteered for a dangerous mission—walking nearly thirty miles at night to warn the town of Mount Vernon, and people who lived nearby, of a coming British attack.

John's mission came right in the nick of time. A few months earlier, the United States had declared war on England, and the conflict known as **The War of 1812** was raging around the country. To make matters worse, U.S. forces at Fort Detroit had surrendered to the British without fighting, and this left British forces wide open to cross Lake Erie and launch an attack on Ohio. **Wyandot** Indians who wanted revenge after a U.S. militia raided one of their villages were rumored to be joining them—and many in the surrounding areas had no idea. The people who sent John worried that Indians, the British, or *both*, were already coming for them.

Because he knew the terrain, John stepped up. That night, he reportedly ran more than twenty-six miles—the distance of a **marathon**—to Mount Vernon. One account has him knocking on doors and shouting: *"Fly! Fly! For your lives! They are murdering at Mansfield!"* At cabin after cabin, he stopped to warn people like **Paul Revere**, who rode his horse through Massachusetts thirty-seven years earlier during the **Revolutionary War** to warn colonists of the approaching British.

But unlike Paul Revere, John had no horse. On foot, and in pitch darkness, John carried the message all the way to Mount Vernon. Some think he made it there and *back* by sunrise.


Mansfield
Mount Vernon
Scale of Miles
Mansfield
Mount Vernon
STATE OF
OHIO


HOLY
BIBLE

A Pioneering Spirit

John's heroic run is well-remembered. But he's also known for preaching the Gospel as a frontier evangelist. John's faith grew to a raging fire during the **Great Awakening**—a Christian revival that swept America in the early 1800s. Wherever he went, John shared God's word and Swedenborg's teachings. Some claim that he gave out gospel tracts that he carried in his tin hat.

Near the end of John's life, things grew harder. A **recession** in 1819 forced him to sell much of the land he owned to survive. With few people able to pay him, he accepted IOU notes—promises to be paid back in the future. As John turned sixty, staying on the frontier's edge where settlers needed apple trees was challenging. Even though he eventually owned 15,000 trees in Indiana, he was never able to stay in one place. He never married or had a family.

John Chapman died of pneumonia at a friend's house in Fort Wayne, Indiana. It was March of 1845, just sixteen years before the Civil War. By that time, the tales of "Johnny Appleseed" had taken on a life of their own.

Over time, John came to embody America's **pioneering spirit**. While he never won a military medal or turned his business **enterprise** into a huge profit, his life is legendary. John's resilience, independent spirit, and generosity remind us of the brave souls who came out and opened up the frontier for everyone else. At a time when a fresh start meant facing the wild unknown, John paved the way by demonstrating **stewardship**. Today, his life helps people appreciate nature and support **conservation** efforts.

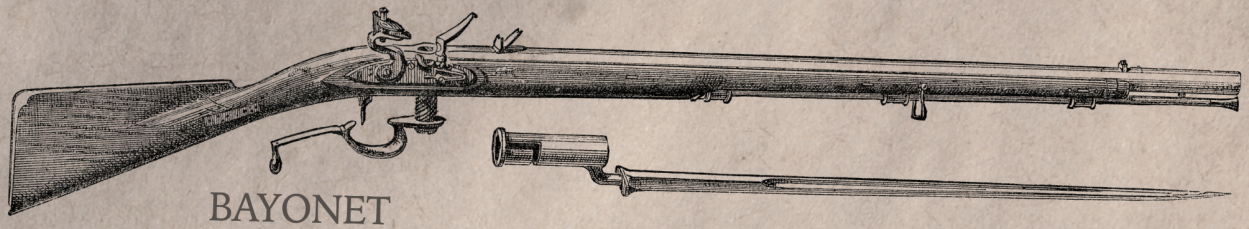
Thanks to him, having faith, relying on yourself, and helping others are not just ways to survive the winter.

They are as American as apple pie.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

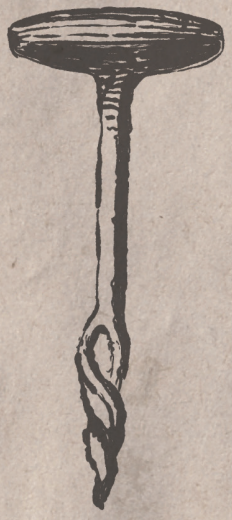
GREAT LAKES

WEAPONRY & TECHNOLOGY



BAYONET

A blade that may be fixed to the muzzle of a firearm. A valuable weapon for soldiers during the War of 1812, especially when their muskets needed reloading.



GIMLET

John Chapman purchased a gimlet—a small, hand-held wooden drill—from a general store in 1797. Pioneers used gimlets to drill holes, build fences, and shape wood in useful ways.



SCREW PRESS

This old invention found new life on the Ohio frontier. A bucket filled with apples sits beneath a heavy weight or "press" attached to a screw. Tightening the screw crushes the apples into pulp and juice—step one in making alcoholic cider.

Make Your Own Homemade Applesauce!

Ingredients

- 4 large Pink Lady apples peeled, cored, and cut into small chunks
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar (may substitute with unrefined sugar such as honey, maple syrup, or coconut sugar)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (about half a lemon)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt



Instructions

- Place all of the ingredients in a medium saucepan and stir well.
- Bring to a boil over medium heat, and reduce heat slightly. Cover and cook 30 minutes, or until the apples are very soft.
- Mash with a potato masher or the back of a spoon until the applesauce is the desired consistency. Serve and enjoy!

Fact or Legend?

The Johnny Appleseed legend is filled with juicy exaggerations. If you've read closely or if you've done your own research, you can figure out which statements about him are FACT or LEGEND.

When you've got your answers written down, check the answers on page 67.

1. Johnny Appleseed walked many miles without shoes. _____
2. Johnny Appleseed wore a heavy iron skillet on his head as protection from Indian arrows. _____
3. Indians on the frontier respected him. Some considered him a "medicine man" with the power to summon magic. _____
4. Johnny Appleseed was born in 1774, just before the American Revolutionary War. _____
5. Johnny Appleseed could chop down as many trees as two men... and just as fast. _____
6. Johnny Appleseed once floated hundreds of miles down a river on a large hunk of ice. _____
7. Johnny Appleseed was very generous and sometimes gave away apple trees for free. _____
8. The bottoms of his feet were so tough that when a rattlesnake bit them, he felt no pain whatsoever. _____
9. Johnny Appleseed's orchards grew tart, bitter apples used for cider, not sweet ones. _____
10. Johnny Appleseed once hid from Indian warriors by lying down in a swamp and taking a nap—with his face out of the water so he could breathe. _____


Dentists hail the apple as nature's toothbrush with its crunchy, fibrous quality. Despite his unkempt appearance, Johnny Appleseed was said to have beautiful teeth. It must have been good genetics, though, as most of his apples were for cider and too tart to eat.
POST CARD
CORRESPONDENCE
ADDRESS
"I can lay on my back, look up at the stars, and it seems almost as though I can see the angels praising God, for he has made all things for good."
-John Chapman

John Chapman's Travels*

POST CARD

FOR CORRESPONDENCE

FOR ADDRESS

After the Prohibition era from 1920-1933, the apple industry began to reinvent itself. It focused on the health benefits of eating apples. This is when the phrase, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," became popular.

All the counties where John Chapman had apple orchards

5 1845. Died in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

OHIO

*Locations on the map are likely but not definite based on best records available.

1 Born in 1774, in Leominster, Massachusetts.
Leominster
MASSACHUSETTS
2 Started his journey in Longmeadow, Massachusetts.
Longmeadow
NEW YORK
3 Chapman's probable first apple orchard in Warren, PA.
PENNSYLVANIA
4 Chapman's cider mills, in Jacob's Creek, PA.
CIDER
Atlantic Ocean

Largest Daily Circulation In New York

WORD SEARCH

VOL. 127 - NO. 39 PRICE 10 CENTS

There are reported to be as many as 200 varieties of apples grown in America today. Over 90% are grown in the state of Washington. The top 10 varieties are Red Delicious, Gala, Granny Smith, Honeycrisp, Fuji, Golden Delicious, Braeburn, Pink Lady, Jonagold, and Rome. Find these apple names in the word search below.

U A R J Z I B D A T Y L T F D R G
G X G G N R U B E A R B K U S J O
N S W M E A B C U X T D L J G O L
C D D S F B T E R Z K P F I G M D
J F Z W F N H A J R N X M B V E E
M X U Q B Y V A L K I H W G Z F N
N C F S X W T D G A X W U T Y H D
Z R M U D Q Z A V P G H H Z T P E
G S U O I C I L E D D E R I J Y L
V M U G V K H Q K E W N M O R L I
D P S I R C Y E N O H S N O Z A C
G J P I N K L A D Y Y A M O Q L I
G L F T R A L Q T N G E H N I P O
P J R X Q Q J A N O F H J F C O U
F W M Y A J E A L U P K M E L I S
S A I U M Q R D U K R L Y G K D X
E D O F J G S Q H K Q I U Z T C A

See answers on page 67


"God talked to him
through every tree, every
leaf, every rock, every
beast great and small,
every atom of creation."
-Author Howard Means

Writing Task

What did you learn from Johnny Appleseed's story?

How did he embody the American spirit?

Glossary

Allegheny: A region of the Eastern United States, including the Allegheny River and Allegheny Mountains, which are part of the Appalachian Mountain Range. Some believe the name comes from a Native American word meaning "fine river" or "beautiful river."

Barter: To trade goods or products directly for other goods or products. Before currencies like the American dollar were widely used, people on the frontier bartered with whiskey, leather goods, or even apple trees.

Calloused: Hardened skin developed from repeated use or exposure, common among people who do physical labor like farming or building.

Conservation: Efforts taken to protect animal species from extinction, or protect and restore natural habitats.

Conviction: Strongly held belief or firm opinion. Convictions influence someone's actions and decisions.

Cultivate: To prepare and use land for raising crops.

Emanuel Swedenborg: A Swedish Christian theologian who emphasized spiritual visions and study of the natural world. Swedenborg's teachings were adopted by small churches and communities in Pennsylvania and throughout the United States during the early 1800s.

Entrepreneurial Spirit: The motivation and willingness to develop, organize, and manage a business venture despite risks and challenges. An entrepreneur is a person who starts and runs a business, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit.

Enterprise: A difficult project or undertaking.

Evangelist: A person who seeks to convert others to the Christian faith, often traveling from place to place to preach.

Frontier: The edge of settled land. In America during the 1800s, the term often referred to land west of the Mississippi River, where pioneers would move to start new lives and communities.

General Store: A retail store common in small towns, especially on the frontier, that sells a wide variety of goods needed by the community.

Grafting: Joining two plants together to grow as one. This technique helps improve plants like apple trees, allowing them to grow better fruit.

The Great Awakening: Two periods in American history when belief in Christianity greatly increased. John Chapman was influenced by the Second Great Awakening, around the late 1700s and early 1800s, which emphasized large gatherings and moral issues like slavery and women's rights.

Hard Currency: Money that was originally made from, or backed, by precious metals like gold and silver. Today, currencies like the American dollar are no longer backed by silver and gold, but they are called "hard currency" when a nation is politically and economically stable.

Life Expectancy: The average number of years a person is expected to live. This varied widely in the 1800s due to different living conditions and medical knowledge.

Marathon: Originally, a long-distance race of about 26 miles; can also refer to any task or activity that requires prolonged effort.

Glossary

Northwest Territory: A region of the early United States encompassing present-day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. It was significant for its early governance under the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which outlawed slavery in the territory. This also set a precedent for the establishment of public education and supported freedom of worship, laying foundational principles for future American expansion.

Nursery: Place where plants, especially young trees and shrubs, are grown for sale or for planting elsewhere.

Ohio Company: An 18th-century land speculation company that sold land along the frontier cheaply.

Paul Revere: An American silversmith and a patriot in the American Revolution. Paul Revere is famous for his midnight ride to alert the colonial militia of approaching British forces.

Pioneering Spirit: The attitude and determination of people willing to endure hardships to explore new territories and create new opportunities.

Recession: A period of economic decline when businesses and consumers spend less money, often leading to higher unemployment.

Revolutionary War: A war fought between the thirteen American colonies and Great Britain from 1775 to 1783. During the war, the colonies fought to gain independence from British rule and joined together to sign the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Rumor: A piece of information or a story that is passed from person to person but has not been confirmed as true.

Sapling: A young tree, especially one that is small and just starting to grow, often used in reference to new growth and potential.

Shawnee: A Native American tribe originally from the Ohio Valley region, known for their resistance against European-American settlers on their land.

Startup Capital: Money or resources used to start a new enterprise.

Stewardship: The responsible management of something entrusted to one's care, such as the environment or property.

Tall Tale: A greatly exaggerated, sometimes humorous story that tells the feats of a larger-than-life hero. Tall tales are common in American folklore.

War of 1812: A war fought by Great Britain and the United States from 1812 to 1815. Even though Great Britain burned the White House and joined Native American allies against the United States, the Battle of New Orleans was a resounding U.S. victory.

Wyandot: A Native American tribe that resided in the northeastern woodlands of the United States. Wyandots spoke the Iroquoian language.

Sources

D, Louisa. "Johnny Appleseed's Legacy Lives on in Fort Wayne." *Visit Fort Wayne.com*. 02 August 2023. https://www.visitfortwayne.com/blog/stories/post/johnny-appleseed-legacy-lives-on-in-fort-wayne. Accessed November 2023.

Gannon, Kim & Kent Walter. "The Lord is Good to Me (Johnny Appleseed)." *Disney Clips*. 1948. https://www.disneyclips.com/lyrics/lyricsmelodytime3.html. Accessed November 2023.

Geiling, Natasha. "The Real Johnny Appleseed Brought Apples—and Booze to the American Frontier." *The Smithsonian*. 10 November 2014. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/real-johnny-appleseed-brought-applesand-booze-american-frontier-180953263/. Accessed November 2023.

Hoagland, Edward. "Johnny Appleseed." *American Heritage*. December 1979. https://www.americanheritage.com/johnny-appleseed. Accessed November 2023.

Kelly, Kate. "Johnny Appleseed Debunked." *America Comes Alive*. https://americacomesalive.com/johnny-appleseed-debunked/. Accessed November 2023.

Marcie. "Easy Homemade Applesauce Recipe." *Flavor the Moments*. 5 October 2021. https://flavorthemoments.com/pink-lady-applesauce/. Accessed November 2023.

Means, Howard. *Johnny Appleseed: The Man, the Myth, the American Story*. Simon and Schuster, 2012.

Synan, Mariel. "Who Was Johnny Appleseed." *History.com*. 10 May 2023. https://www.history.com/news/who-was-johnny-appleseed. Accessed November 2023.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Johnny Appleseed: American Nurseryman." *Britannica.com*. 31 October 2023. https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Chapman. Accessed November 2023.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "The Second Great Awakening." *Britannica.com*. 15 November 2023. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Second-Great-Awakening. Accessed November 2023.

Tristan, David. "September 26, 1774—Johnny Appleseed: a real man, a real person." *ABC27.com*. 26 September 2023. https://www.abc27.com/history/sept-26-1774-johnny-appleseed-a-real-person-a-real-tall-tale/. Accessed November 2023.

WA Apple. "The Story of Johnny Appleseed." *Waapple.org*. https://waapple.org/johnny-appleseed/. Accessed November 2023.

Image Credit: Laurin Rinder / Shutterstock.com

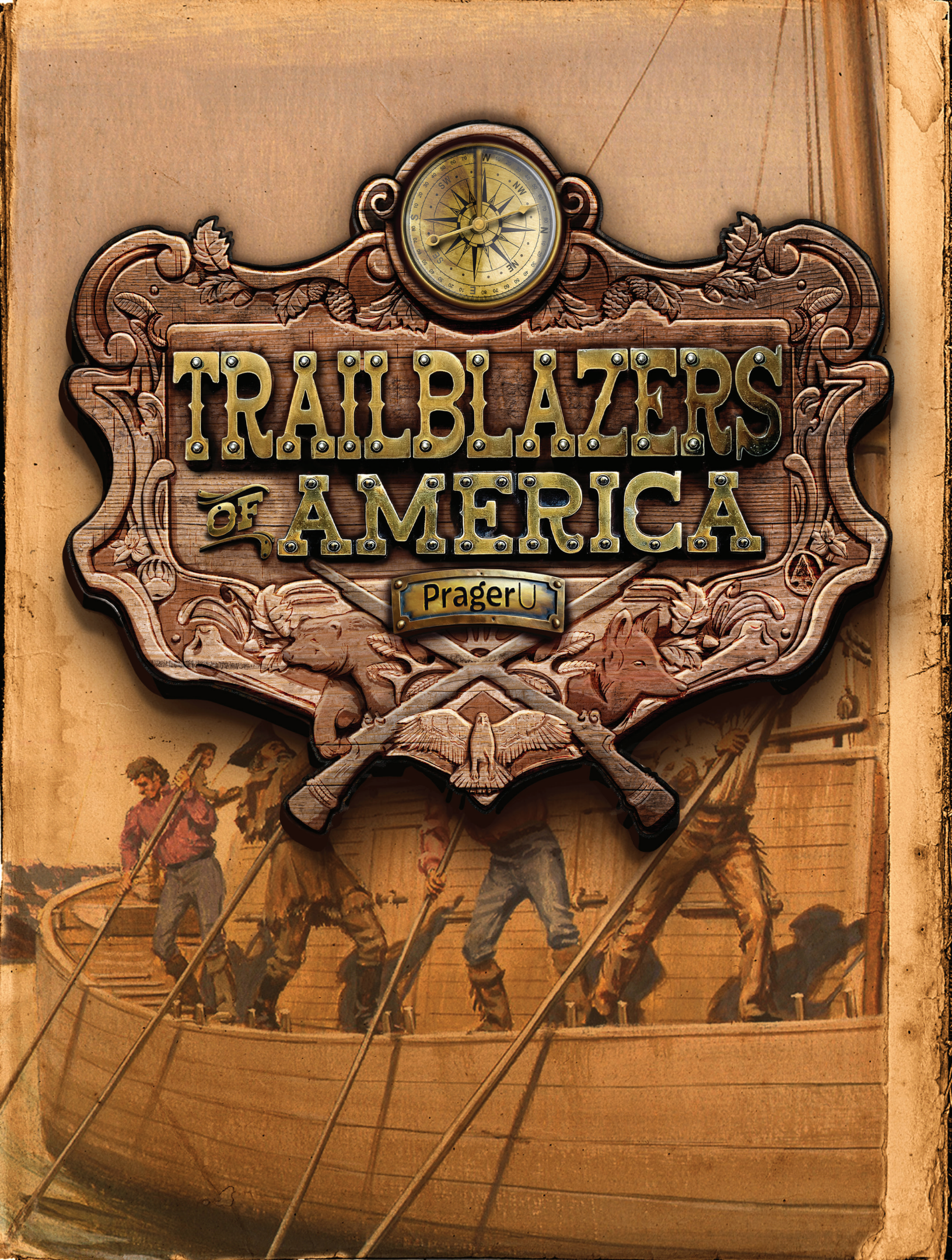
Answers

Fact or Legend?

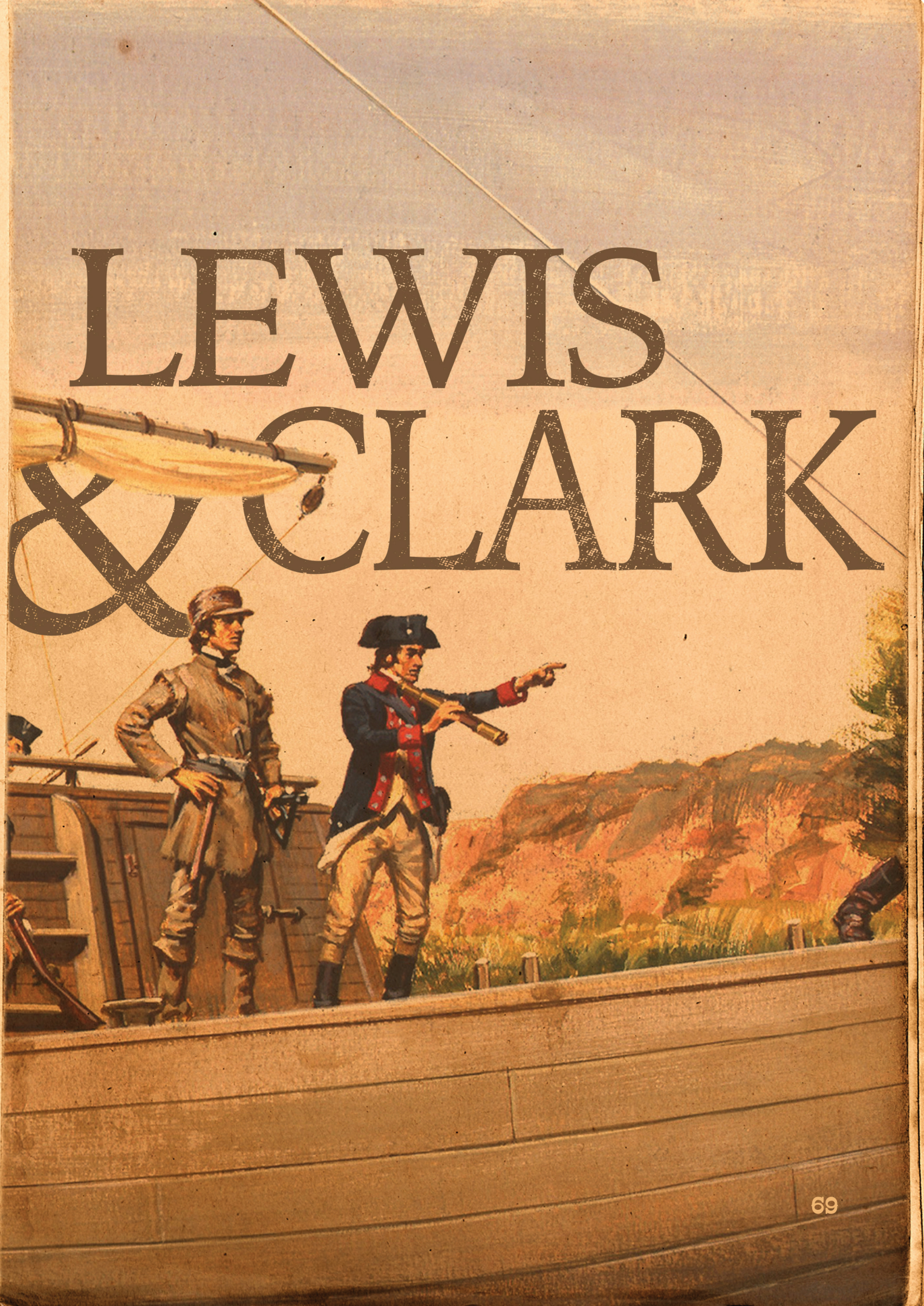
1. FACT
2. LEGEND
3. FACT
4. FACT
5. LEGEND
6. LEGEND
7. FACT
8. LEGEND
9. FACT
10. LEGEND

Word Search

U A R J Z I B D A T Y L T F D R G
G X G G N R U B E A R B K U S J O
N S W M E A B C U X T D L J G O L
C D D S F B T E R Z K P F I G M D
J F Z W F N H A J R N X M B V E E
M X U Q B Y V A L K I H W G Z F N
N C F S X W T D G A X W U T Y H D
Z R M U D Q Z A V P G H H Z T P E
G S U O I C I L E D D E R I J Y L
V M U G V K H Q K E W N M O R L I
D P S I R C Y E N O H S N O Z A C
G J P I N K L A D Y Y A M O Q L I
G L F T R A L Q T N G E H N I P O
P J R X Q Q J A N O F H J F C O U
F W M Y A J E A L U P K M E L I S
S A I U M Q R D U K R L Y G K D X
E D O F J G S Q H K Q I U Z T C A

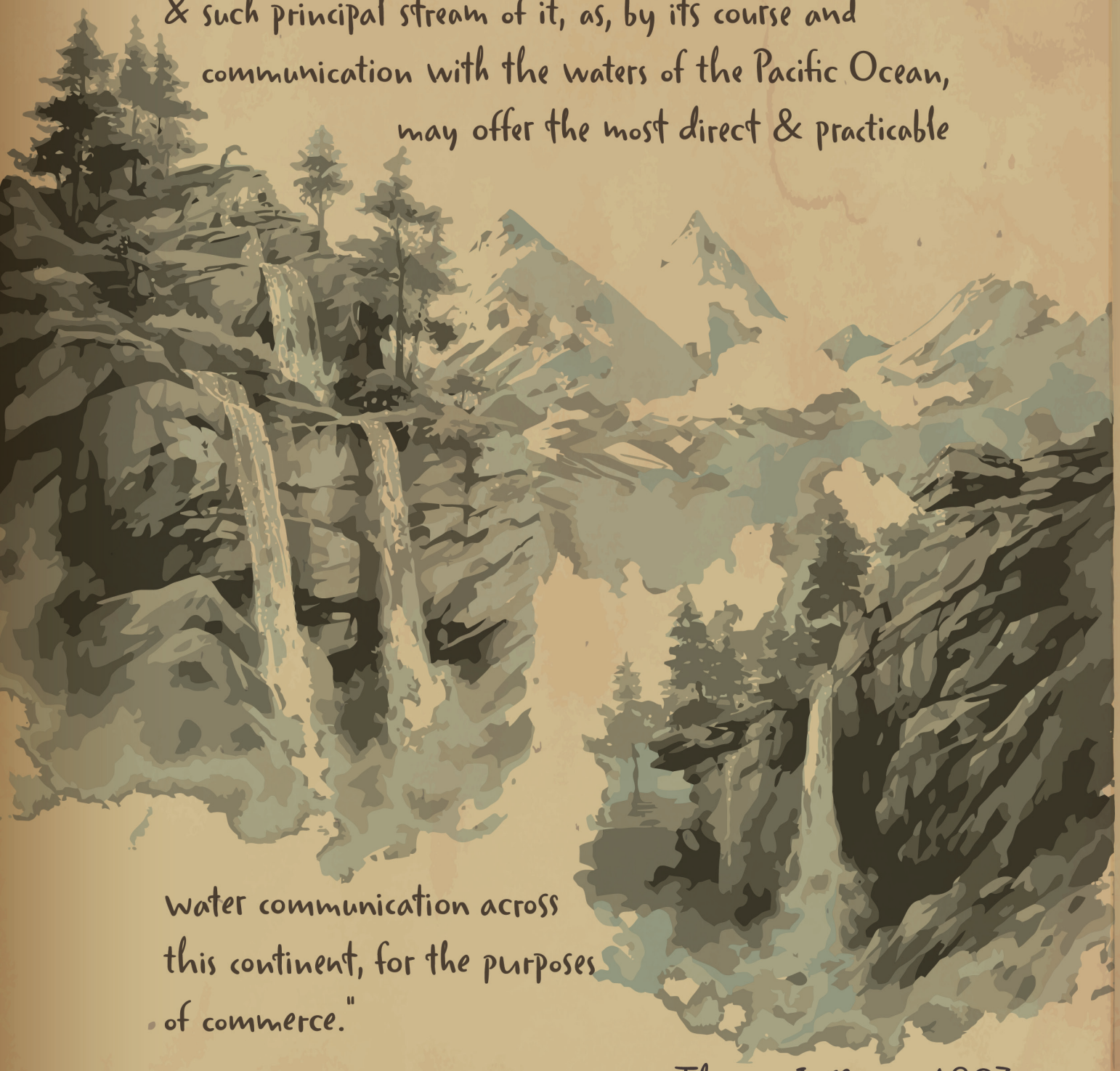

TRAILBLAZERS
OF AMERICA
PragerU

LEWIS & CLARK




LEWIS
&
CLARK

"The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri River, & such principal stream of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct & practicable



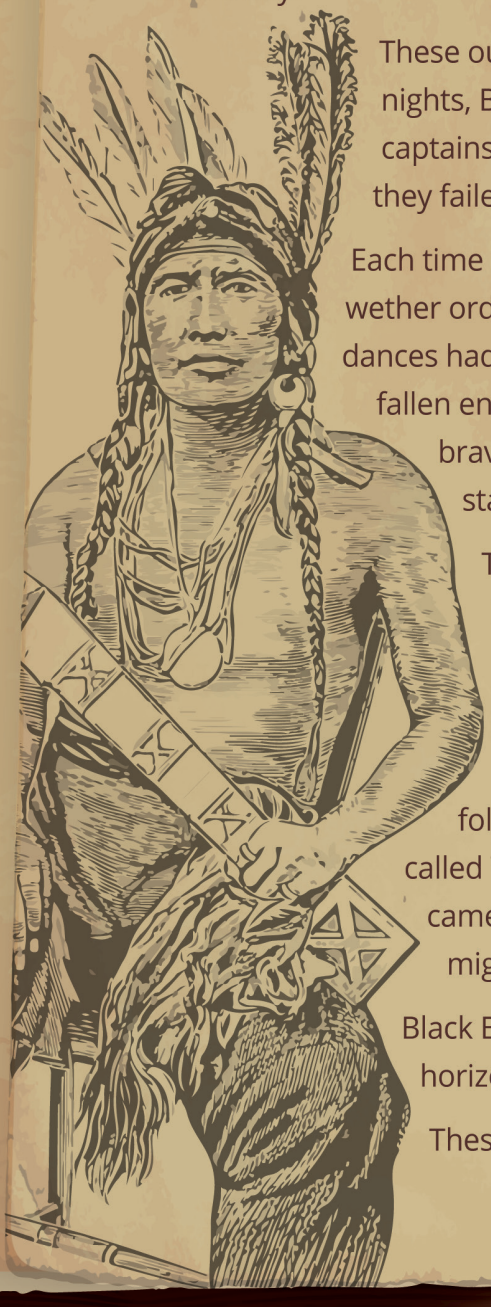
water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce."

- Thomas Jefferson, 1803

Standoff

Banks of the Missouri River (near modern Pierre, South Dakota), September 1804

The worried chief, Black Buffalo, stood watching as the strong breeze carried the boats away. *These white men are different.* The French trappers and Spanish hunters who came before them into the lands of the **Teton Sioux** had been easy to intimidate and turn away.



These outsiders called themselves Americans, and for four days and nights, Black Buffalo's warriors had tried everything to keep the two captains and their team of 40 explorers from continuing upriver—but they failed.

Each time the Indians had drawn their weapons, the captain called Meriwether ordered his men to ready and aim their muskets in return. War dances hadn't frightened them, nor had the display of scalps from the fallen enemies in past battles. When bullying didn't work, his Indian braves had tried trickery and sabotage... but these Americans stayed patient and alert.

The Americans even met the Sioux's demand for a lofty **toll**. However, instead of turning back like the others had, these captains presented Black Buffalo with a gift from the "Great Father"—silver medals and a red, white, and blue flag.

Desperately, Black Buffalo had warned that his warriors would follow these Americans and wait for them to tire, but the captain called William had not flinched. He'd simply replied that if any harm came to them, the "Great Father" who sent them would unleash a mighty army and destroy the entire Sioux nation.

Black Buffalo watched as the sails of the **keelboats** faded into the horizon. *The world is changing,* he thought.

These Americans were fearless, and they hadn't backed down.

Close Call

News of the standoff quickly spread across the plains, influencing tribes big and small. Getting the mighty, and often violent, Sioux to back down was no small feat, and for the remainder of their journey, the fearless captains were respected by the many different Native American groups they met along their way.

However, respect from locals didn't mean the exploration would be easy or without danger. The exciting 8,000-mile trip across the wild, uncharted **Louisiana Territory** took over two years to complete, and it was filled with challenges.

Ultimately, the expedition didn't achieve everything the "Great Father" (President Thomas Jefferson) had hoped when he hired the two brave captains. Nonetheless, the journey made them celebrities. When they finally made it back to their starting point near St. Louis, a crowd was waiting onshore to celebrate their safety and success, and from that moment, their fame spread across the country. Their young Shoshone Indian guide, **Sacagawea**, became widely known as well, but the two captains remained front and center.

You probably know them by their last names, "Lewis and Clark."



Exploring a Continent

In the early 1800s, Americans were eager for land. Fortunately, Thomas Jefferson—our country's third president after George Washington and John Adams—had just purchased over 800,000 square miles of land from Napoleon, the ruler of France, in a momentous deal. For only $15 million dollars (roughly four cents an acre), the United States nearly doubled its size. Napoleon needed cash for a possible war with Great Britain, so he was willing to sell far-off lands in America at a bargain. The agreement was called the **Louisiana Purchase**, and once it was completed, Jefferson needed to explore and map the vast, uncharted lands that were now part of the United States.

To complete this task, Jefferson turned to his personal secretary, Meriwether Lewis, and Lewis's former army commander, William Clark. Lewis and Clark were both in their early thirties and seasoned military leaders. Their leadership and **camaraderie** would be crucial to the journey's success.

With a team of forty-five men and three custom-built riverboats, the two set out to explore the far-reaching **Missouri River**. They also hoped to establish trade routes and find a possible water route to the Pacific Ocean. Throughout the journey, Lewis and Clark would map new territory, gather samples of plants and wildlife, and meet dozens of native inhabitants across the **Great Plains** and the Northwest.

For land-hungry American settlers, the expedition's success was the news they needed. Lewis and Clark proved that travel across the plains and all the way to Oregon was possible. With that proof, the great race of **Westward expansion** would soon intensify.




MAP OF THE
SSISSIPPI TERRITORY
OF THE
TED STATES
URING THE PERIOD OF THE
ICAN FUR TRADE
FROM ST: LOUIS BETWEEN THE YEARS
7 and 1843,
on of Indian Tribes, Trading Posts, Routes
and other features of interest.
ALE OF MILES:
COPYRIGHT 1901, BY
FRANCIS P. HARPER.
Drawn by Paul Burgoldt
History of th
ROCKY MOUNTAINS
PLATEAU OF MEXICO
GULF OF MEXICO
CALIFORNIA
PAWNEES
OTOES AND MISSOURIS
ARAPAHOES
APACHES
NAVAJOS
MOJAVES
UTES
PAIUTES
DIGGERS
ST. LOUIS
FORT SMITH
FORT LEAVENWORTH
INDEPENDENCE
SANTA FE TRAIL
OREGON TRAIL
CALIFORNIA TRAIL
SALT LAKE TRAIL

THE MAIN PLAYERS



WILLIAM CLARK

AGE: 33

SKILLS

Leadership, military tactics, marksmanship, journaling, map-making.

BACKGROUND

Born in Caroline County, Virginia, to a wealthy family—the ninth of ten children.

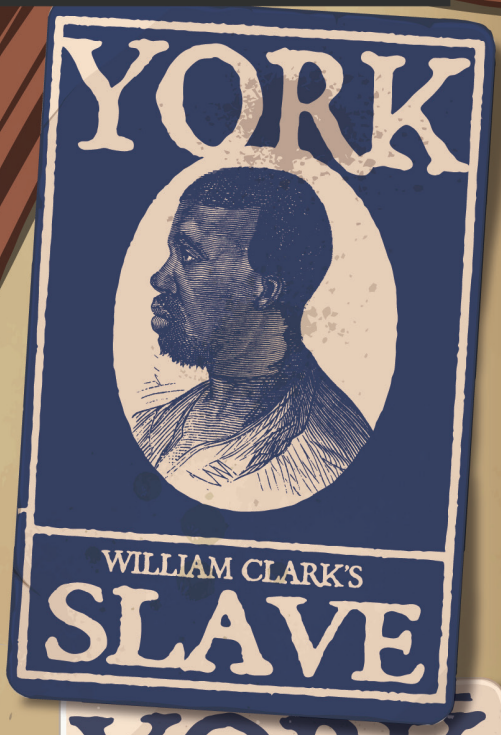
MILITARY BACKGROUND

Five of William's brothers fought in the Revolutionary War.

William volunteered for the militia at age 19 and fought in the Northwest Indian War. He eventually rose to lieutenant, and his company contributed to a stunning battle victory in 1794.

SPECIAL ABILITY

Clark commanded Lewis during the Northwest Indian War, and the two became lifelong companions.





SACAGAWEA

AGE: Approximately 16

SKILLS

Wayfaring, geographic knowledge, speaking and interpreting tribal languages (Hidatsa, Shoshone).

BACKGROUND

After being born near the Continental Divide in present-day Idaho, Sacagawea was taken during a raid by the Hidatsa tribe.

Charbonneau purchased her as a bride when she was about thirteen years old, and the two were hired as guides and interpreters by Lewis and Clark.

SPECIAL ABILITY

Sacagawea gave birth to Charbonneau's son Jean-Baptiste during the journey. She also helped arrange passage, horses, and other supplies for the group that allowed them to complete the journey to the Pacific Ocean.

YORK

AGE: 30–35

SKILLS

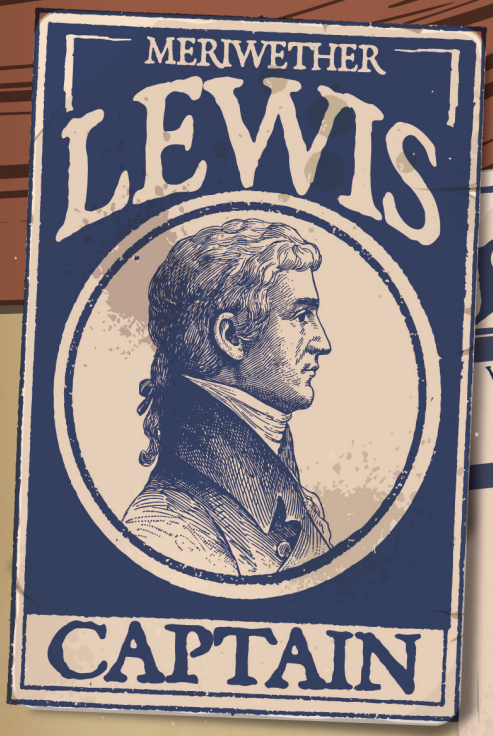
Hunting, service, camping, exploration, physical strength.

BACKGROUND

William Clark inherited York from his father around 1799. York accompanied William on the expedition and made crucial contributions to its success.

SPECIAL ABILITY

According to recorded history, York was the first African-American to cross the continent and see the Pacific Ocean. York also possessed a skill that many others on the journey did not have—the ability to swim.



MERIWETHER
LEWIS

AGE: 29

SKILLS

Wayfaring (navigation), medicine, botany, and zoology (perfect for identifying new plants and animals).

BACKGROUND

Born near Charlottesville, Virginia, but grew up in Georgia, where he learned hunting and outdoor survival skills.

Formally educated and became an amateur scientist.

Served as a soldier in William Clark's rifle company during the Northwestern Indian War.

SPECIAL ABILITY

As Jefferson's personal secretary, Lewis was the president's choice to lead the expedition.



BOATMEN & HUNTERS

AGE: 25-30

SKILLS

Hunting, boat repair and maintenance, camping, exploration, physical strength.

BACKGROUND

For their 45-man crew, Lewis and Clark selected men with military backgrounds, boat-making experience, and outdoor survival skills.

SPECIAL ABILITY

A French-speaking member of their crew named Drouillard helped them speak to Charbonneau, a French fur trapper.



TOUISSANT CHARBONNEAU

AGE: 37

SKILLS

Hunting, trapping, interpreting French and Hidatsa.

BACKGROUND

Born in present-day Quebec, of French and Iroquois ancestry. Charbonneau and his wife Sacagawea joined the expedition in the winter of 1884 when they were hired as interpreters.

SPECIAL ABILITY

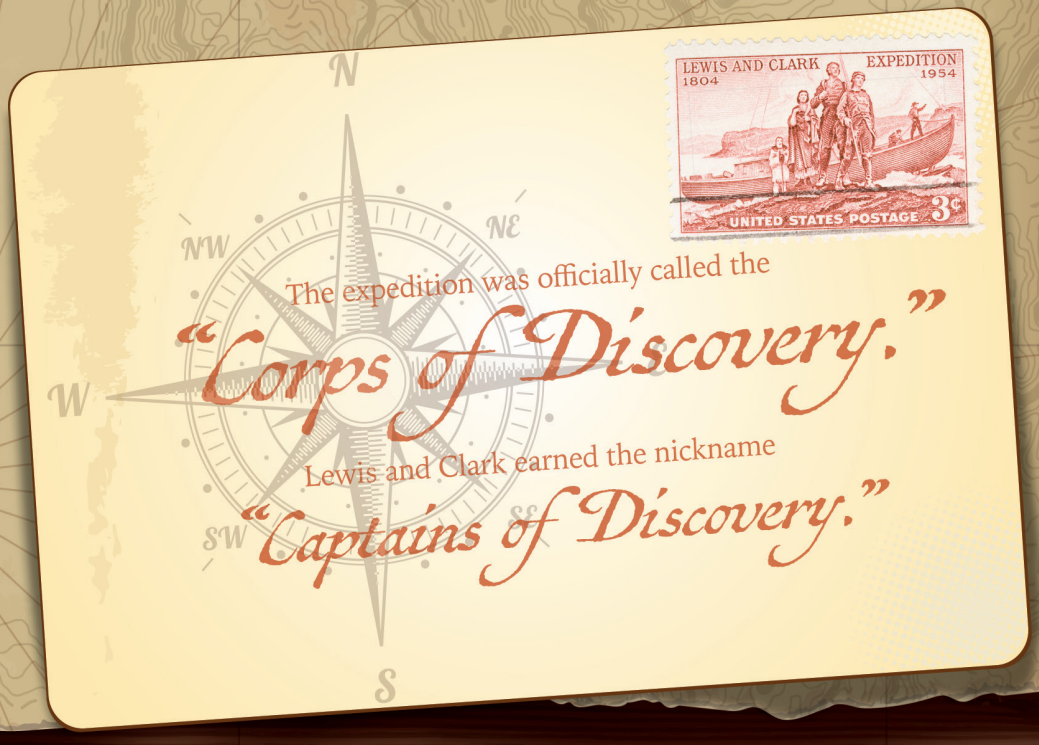
As a fur trapper, Charbonneau lived among the Hidatsa tribe and learned their language. During that time, he purchased (or possibly won) Sacagawea and another young bride named Otter Woman.

Why Go West?

President Jefferson never traveled West himself, but he spoke often about seeing the frontier expand. He believed that Americans moving West would spread liberty, productivity, and national unity across a sprawling continent. Jefferson described this grand vision as an "Empire of Liberty." With so much land available, he thought the United States could reach its full potential as a country filled with **yeoman** farmers and newly incorporated states.

With such lofty goals, Lewis and Clark's expedition was a vital step in opening up the continent, and it was unknown just how far the Missouri River would take them westward.

Jefferson was fascinated with the idea of a **Northwest Passage**—a **waterway** he hoped would connect the heart of the country to the Pacific Ocean, and one of Lewis and Clark's goals was to find this Northwest Passage if it existed.



To transport supplies along the Missouri River, Lewis and Clark built a custom keelboat—perfect for navigating shallow, gentle water. The keelboat could flow with the current or catch wind with a sail... but for the first part of the expedition, the crew had to pull it upstream with ropes and horses.

Expedition Facts

U.S. Congress gave the expedition a budget of $2,500 *(or about $1.6 million adjusted for today's prices).*



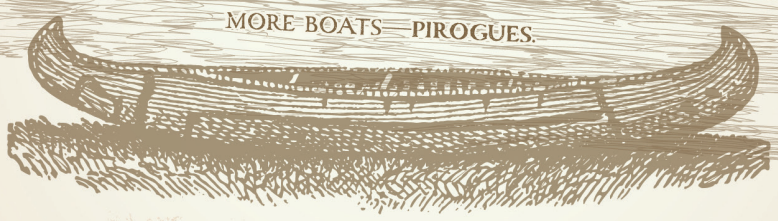
Those funds paid for the three boats, gifts, guns, clothing, medical supplies, paper, math instruments like a compass and three thermometers, and supplies for forty-five men.

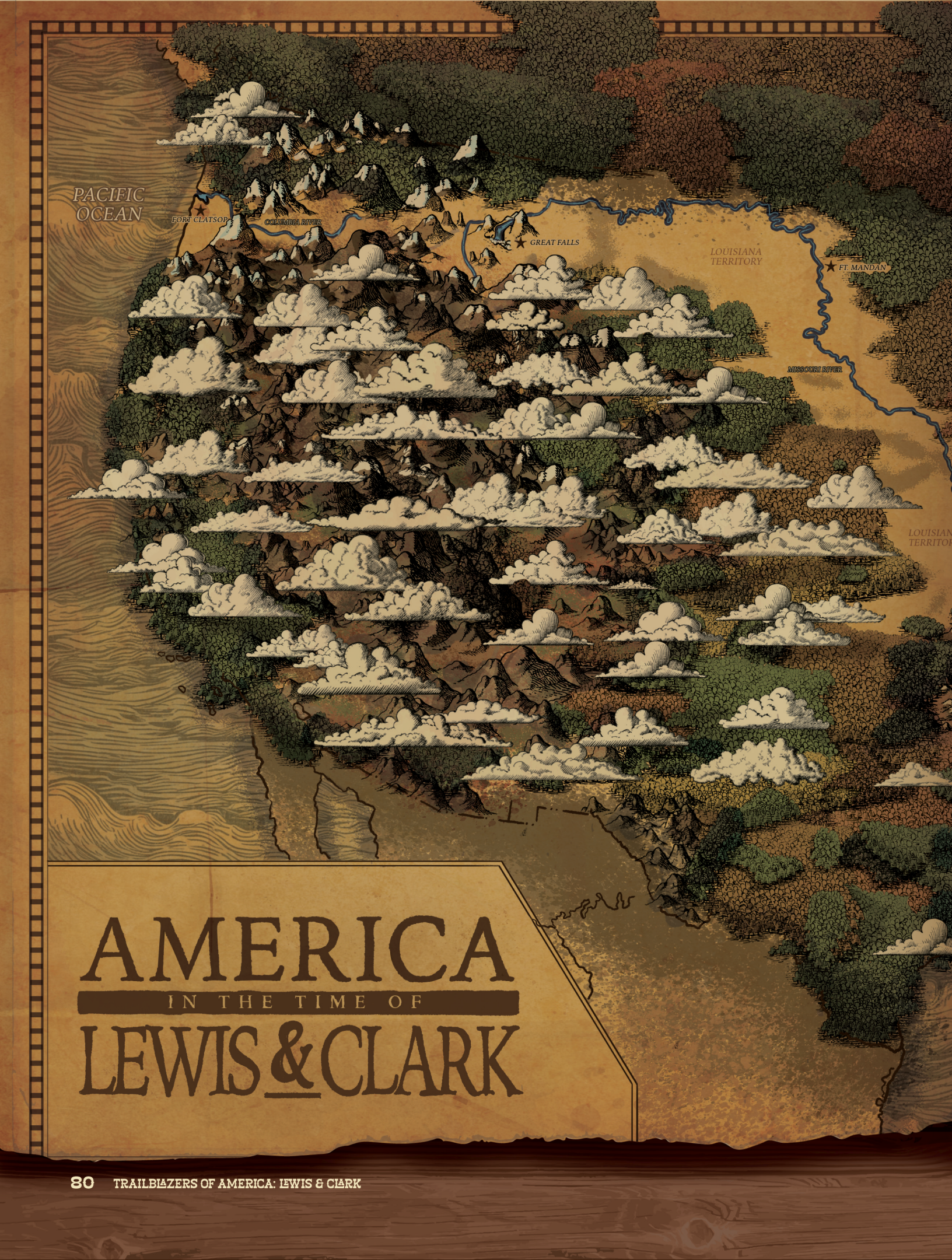
The expedition carried **200 pounds** of gunpowder.



The crew needed this to "live off the land" by hunting meat and other natural resources. If they faced hostilities, the guns and gunpowder would offer protection.

The keelboat was fitted with a mounted blunderbuss, or "swivel gun" for self-defense. The expedition also included two more boats—pirogues.




PACIFIC OCEAN
FORT CLATSOP
COLUMBIA RIVER
GREAT FALLS
LOUISIANA TERRITORY
FT. MANDAN
MISSOURI RIVER
AMERICA
IN THE TIME OF
LEWIS & CLARK


VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
NEW YORK
NEW YORK CITY
NEW JERSEY
PHILADELPHIA
PENNSYLVANIA
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
D.C.
VIRGINIA
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON
GEORGIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
TENNESSEE
KENTUCKY
OHIO
INDIANA
ILLINOIS
WISCONSIN TERRITORY
MICHIGAN TERRITORY
DETROIT
CHICAGO
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
OHIO RIVER
ST. LOUIS
NEW ORLEANS
Appalachian Mountains
Appalachian Mountains
CUMBERLAND GAP

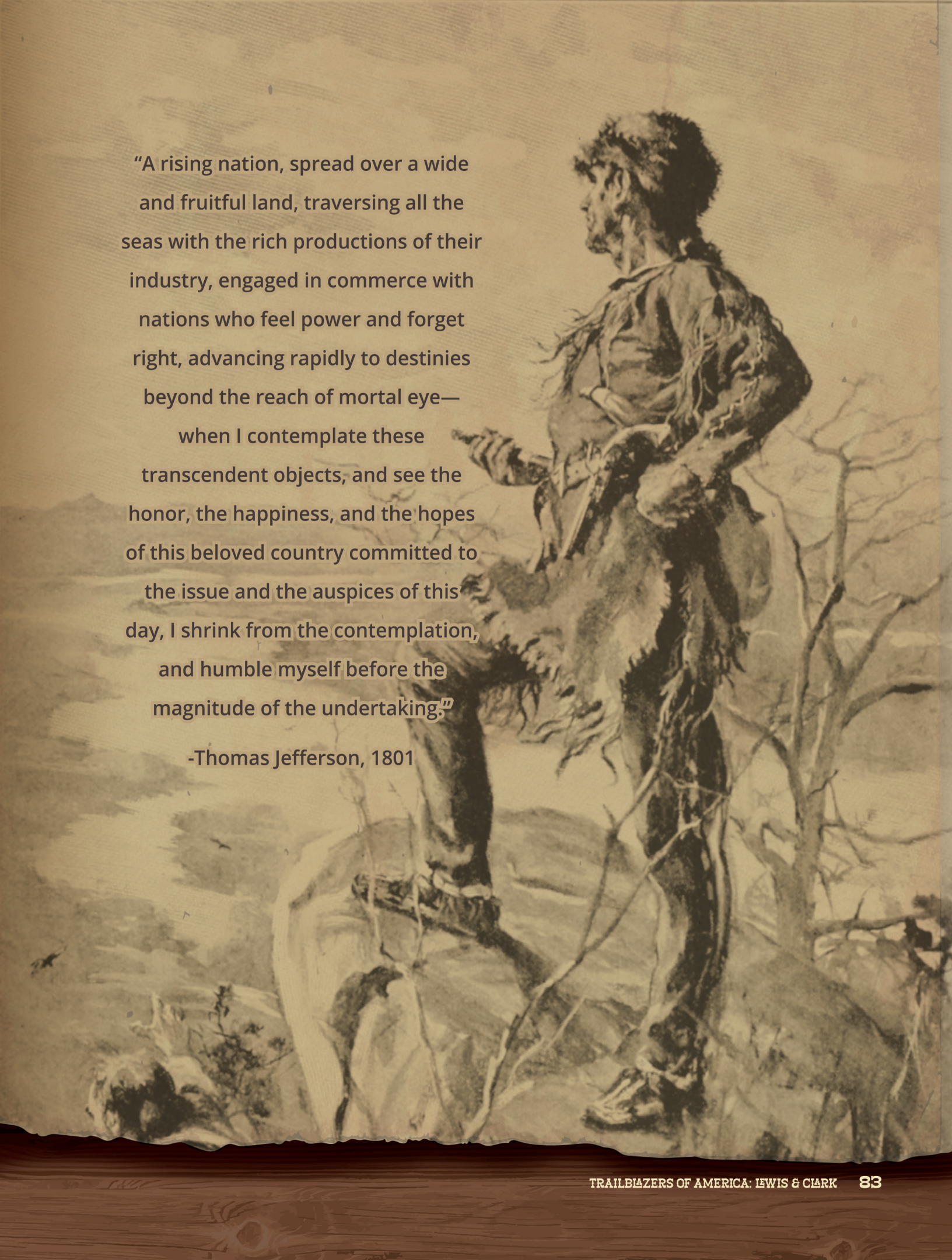
On Through Winter

Having met the Lakota Sioux and lived to tell about it, Lewis and Clark pushed further along the Missouri River into the unknown north. In his journals, Lewis recorded scenes of incredible wildlife—silver salmon flickering in the river, herds of buffalo rippling over golden hills.

But, as the expedition reached present-day North Dakota, new challenges arose. Mosquitos swarmed. Heavy rain and uprooted trees made pushing the boats upriver even more difficult. When they reached the rocky, rugged waterfall near **Great Falls**, Montana, they had to unpack and **portage** the boats. This alone took a month. Knowing that winter and heavy snow would be coming soon, the captains searched for a place to build a shelter. They chose to build a **fortification** near the campgrounds of the friendly Mandan Indian tribe—Fort Mandan.

There, among the dreary, snow-covered plains, Lewis and Clark would gain a huge advantage—the knowledge of a pregnant, teenaged Shoshone girl named Sacagawea they'd hired to guide them.





"A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye— when I contemplate these transcendent objects, and see the honor, the happiness, and the hopes of this beloved country committed to the issue and the auspices of this day, I shrink from the contemplation, and humble myself before the magnitude of the undertaking."

-Thomas Jefferson, 1801

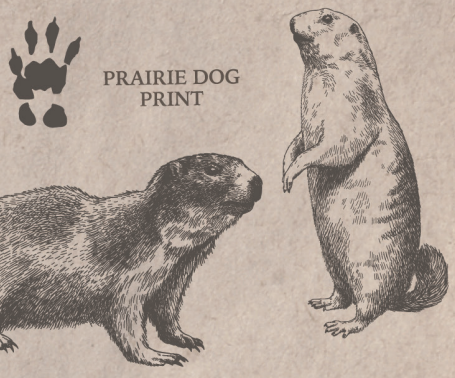
A FIELD GUIDE TO

PLAINS & MISSOURI RIVER ANIMALS



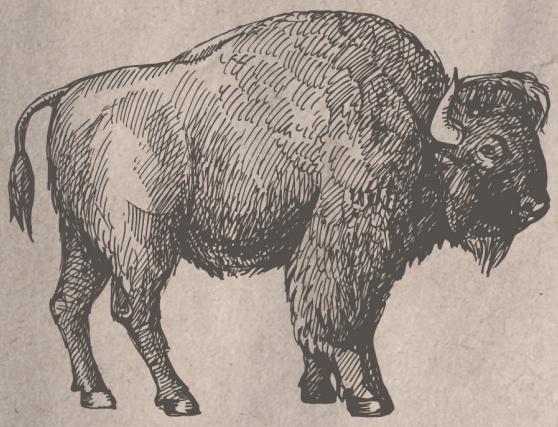
BIGHORN SHEEP

As the name suggests, bighorn sheep are known for their large, tough, curved horns. A single pair of horns might weigh thirty pounds.



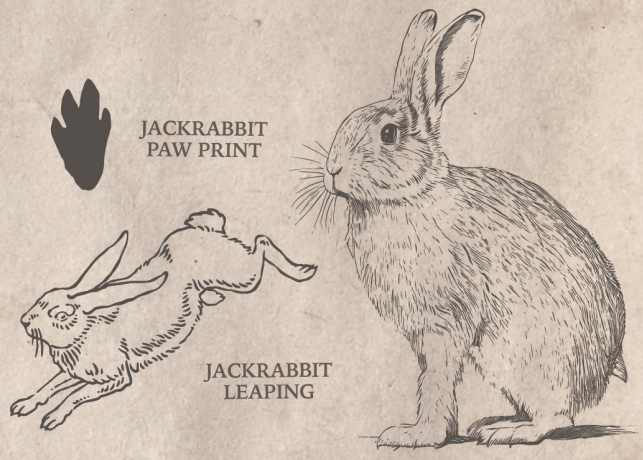
PRAIRIE DOG

Lewis and Clark probably discovered prairie dogs on the Great Plains. The name "prairie dog" comes from the location (their burrows are vital to the ecosystem) and their likeness to little dogs.



AMERICAN BISON

Large, husky, and only found in North America! Bison are grass grazers who travel in herds. A single one can grow six feet high and weigh close to 2,800 pounds.



JACKRABBIT

Long legs, short tail, and insanely high leaps! When Meriwether Lewis first saw this springy prairie-dweller, he thought it was the "mountain hare of Europe." Jackrabbits actually are hares—ones who can jump four feet high.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

PLAINS & MISSOURI RIVER PLANTS



BUR OAK

One of the few trees strong enough to survive in the Great Plains. Tough bark and thick, leathery leaves help shield the bur oak from scorching sun and wind.



SHORTGRASS

These prickly, dark yellow grasses cover much of the Great Plains. The harsh climate and shortage of rain makes these plants tough and resilient—a key food source for the buffalo who once grazed on them.



SNOW-ON-THE-MOUNTAIN

A sturdy plant with gray-green leaves and elegant white flowers. William Clark probably collected this flower when the expedition passed by the Yellowstone River in Montana.



INDIAN HEMP

A waxy, flowering plant that Native American tribes used to make textiles (clothing fabric). Indian Hemp is also called "dogbane" and grows wild all over modern-day Idaho.

Continental Divide

Modern-day Salmon National Forest, Idaho, August 1805

Feet, legs, ankles—everything ached, but Meriwether kept going. Behind him and down the embankment, the men formed a slithering line. In the distance, he heard the Corps' horses nickering. Here, the dirt was so steep that they'd given them a rest and started climbing on foot.

A little higher, Meriwether thought.



He was keeping an eye on his friend William Clark, who was up ahead but not out of sight. William, always the fearless leader, climbed faster than anyone. *Soon*, Meriwether hoped, *any minute now, we'll toast a view of the* ***Columbia River****... maybe the ocean*. When he heard a grunt, Meriwether turned. Sacagawea was breathing hard; her dark hair gleamed with sweat.

"How's he doing?" Meriwether asked, peering over at little Jean-Baptiste, who was strapped and bundled on his mother's back.

Sacagawea smiled.

Jean-Baptiste was only six months old, but he'd already traveled hundreds of miles. William adored him and had started calling him "Pomp." With words Meriwether could not **decipher**, Sacagawea pointed up the mountain and tilted her head.

"Yes," Meriwether nodded. "We're very close."

Ten minutes later, a chilled wind was rushing over them. Meriwether shielded his eyes from the glare and stood next to William. Neither one spoke. The view from the peak was breathtaking. The day was clear and they could probably see fifty miles or more.

But there was no ocean.

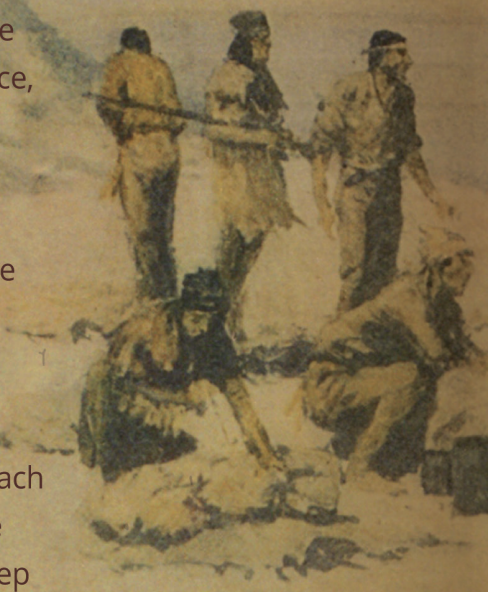
To the west sat more jagged, snow-tipped mountains.

The view from fourteen-thousand-feet high along the Continental Divide must have been incredible—and no doubt, disappointing. After following the Missouri River thousands of miles and then continuing on foot, the view of more mountains confirmed a sad reality—there was no Northwest Passage linking the interior of the country to the Columbia River that fed into the Pacific. To reach the coast, they would have to keep climbing and stretch their meager supplies even further.

Game Changers

To complete the journey on foot, Lewis and Clark needed to communicate with tribes they had never met. Fortunately, they found a team of interpreters who could translate English to French, and French to Hidatsa or Shoshone.

Even with a newborn on her back, Sacagawea proved **invaluable**. When her husband, Charbonneau, decided to join the expedition, she came right along with him. Her knowledge of edible plants like wild licorice and artichokes expanded the Corps' diet. Her presence, along with her baby, signaled peace to other tribes, which made encounters much safer. When one of the boats nearly **capsized**, Sacagawea calmly saved valuable equipment from the freezing water. Her guidance was crucial in the Idaho-Montana area, where she recognized landmarks leading to her native Shoshone tribe.



In a surprising plot twist, a meeting with the leaders of her own Hidatsa tribe reunited Sacagawea with her brother, Chief Cameahwait. When the chief and his long-lost sister recognized each other, everyone celebrated. This reunion may have convinced the tribe to give the expedition the supplies and horses needed to keep going on land.

Lewis's journals, along with other accounts of the journey, leave one thing clear: Sacagawea's knowledge and presence were game-changers. Translation, combined with cultural knowledge, made communication with natives fluid and helpful, unlocking more chapters of the expedition.

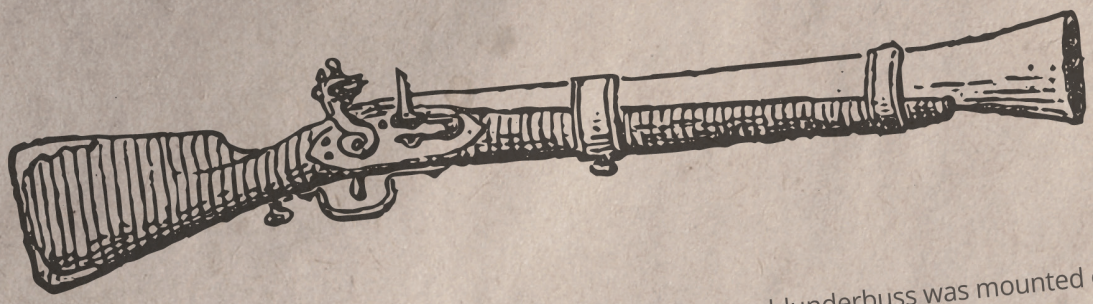
Can You Hear Me?

Working as a team, Drouillard, Charbonneau, and Sacagawea helped interpret. Communication on the frontier often looked like a game of "telephone," with several people working to pass a message accurately. The chain began with Lewis and Clark telling Drouillard what to say. Drouillard then translated English into French. Next, Charbonneau translated French to Hidatsa. Finally, Sacagawea translated Hidatsa to Shoshone or other **dialects**—and vice versa.



A FIELD GUIDE TO

PLAINS & MISSOURI RIVER WEAPONRY & TECHNOLOGY



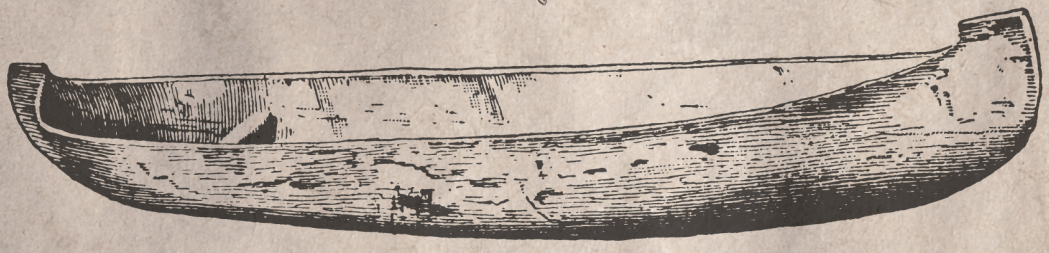
BLUNDERBUSS

A short-range "thunder gun" similar to a shotgun. In the 1800s, a blunderbuss was mounted on wagons or boats as a defensive weapon that could stop a crowd. The gun's flared muzzle made loading lead balls, scrap iron, or even gravel fast and easy.



BOW AND ARROW

Sioux Indians used this tried and true weapon to intimidate and attack their enemies. Bowstrings made from buffalo sinew could launch an arrow one hundred yards at a speed of 180 feet per second.



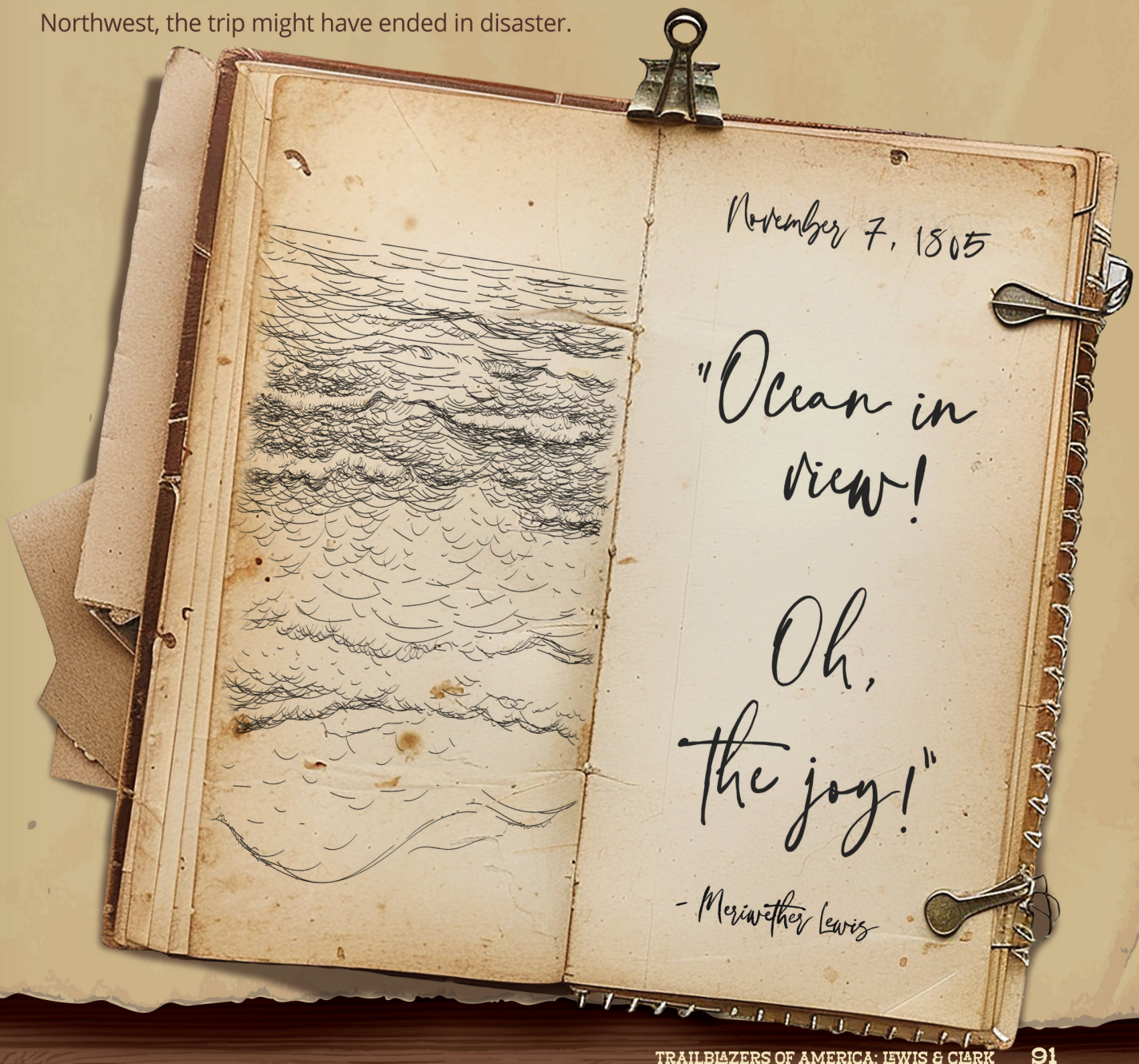
DUGOUT CANOE

A skinny, lightweight boat made for two or three people. After friendly Indians showed Lewis and Clark how to make canoes by hollowing out a log with fire, the two explorers paddled them down the Columbia River to the Pacific.

Onward to Oregon

With fresh supplies and a **canoe**-building lesson from the nearby Nez Perce tribe, the Corps of Discovery rallied. With perseverance and the incredible help of locals who knew the land and how to navigate it, Lewis and Clark made it through another set of mountains and started paddling on the Columbia River.

Without those advantages or the partnership of Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest, the trip might have ended in disaster.



Tiebreaker

Oregon Coast, November 1805

Clark's mind raced with questions. *Was it a huge mistake to leave this to a vote?* He knew giving each member of the expedition equal power was risky, and as the hands of his men continued rising, panic began sitting in. *We must move south of the river! It's for survival! How could Meriwether and I have been more clear?!*

As votes for the party to stay where they were continued coming in, Captain William Clark felt trapped. He knew at this point in the long journey, direct orders could lead to trouble. Everyone on the team had risked their lives and proved their value, and direct orders could easily have been met with **mutiny**.

Clark finished counting and paused... a *Tie*!

His heart sank, he hesitated, but just as the captain opened his mouth to speak, he was interrupted by a chorus of grunts and head nods towards the two in the corner. The black slave and the Indian girl. Neither York nor Sacagawea had voted yet.

Clark looked at the pair and couldn't hold back a small smile. He had no idea if either was about to vote in favor of his and Captain Lewis's favored plan, but he was in awe of the moment. Maybe nowhere else on earth, during this time in history, would the opinions of York and Sacagawea be considered, but here, things were different. At the end of the American continent, after thousands of miles of the entire team working together, the slave and the Indian were viewed as equals.

"OK, you two, you've been quiet long enough," Clark said, relaxing his grin and focusing sternly. "Hand up or down?"

Neither raised a hand, but both gave a nod of agreement towards Captain Clark. They each wanted to move south. *What a relief!*

"That settles it," Clark said cheerfully, but with respect for the defeated. "No time to waste. Let's get across this river and get to building a fort."

An Equal Vote

Historians cite this as a remarkable moment—the first time a woman, Sacagawea, and a slave, York, shared an equal vote with American men. Descendants of slaves and women would not gain the right to vote until 1870 and 1920 respectively. The Corps' decision to give everyone a say in where they camped that winter was important for everyone's survival—and a promising preview of freedoms to come.

That vote illustrated another quality that continues to shape America: earned respect, regardless of one's background. Over chilled plains, tough mountains, and all the way to a rainy coastline, there was little room for prejudice or discrimination. To survive, everyone had to prove themselves. Proving one's self earned respect, regardless of race, gender, or where one came from.



There and Back Again

The decision to stay and build **Fort Clatsop** (near present-day Astoria) was not an easy one. During the wet, cold winter, the Corps could do little more than rest, journal, and gather supplies for the return journey.

On the way back, Lewis and Clark revisited the Nez Perce Indians in Idaho. There, and after waiting for the snow to melt, they collected their horses and took a smoother, faster route through the mountains. Further east, at a spot called Lolo Pass, the Corps separated to explore more of the Great Plains. The two groups met up about five weeks later, and their return journey along the Missouri River began in earnest.

When they returned to Camp Dubois near St. Louis, Lewis and Clark were celebrities. They had been gone well over two years; many doubted they would make it back at all. Balls and receptions carried them all the way to Washington D.C., where Clark presented their maps and journals to President Jefferson at the White House.

After returning, both Lewis and Clark were given 1,600 acres of land. Jefferson appointed Clark **Territorial Governor** of Missouri, a role he held from 1813 to 1820. Later, Clark married and had children. He also adopted Sacagawea's son, Jean-Baptiste, and her daughter, Lisette. Lewis received the role of Territorial Governor of Louisiana. Unfortunately, he died mysteriously in October 1809, only a few years after the expedition. Historians believe that Lewis suffered from depression, and many think that his bond with Clark as a friend and co-captain helped sustain him through the journey.

The surviving crew received double pay and 320 acres of land each. Clark reportedly freed his slave, York.

Wide Open

When most of North America was mysterious and unexplored, Lewis and Clark kicked the door open. While proving travel across the West was possible, they charted many of the geography, waterways, and mountains we know today. They also discovered (and even named) many plants and animals. The jackrabbit, coyote, and prairie dog all owe their names to the expedition.

With Sacagawea's help, the pair successfully made contact with dozens of Native American tribes. This helped President Jefferson establish **diplomatic** ties for trade and cooperation.

Spurred on by land and opportunity, waves of people followed Lewis and Clark's route along the Missouri River. These early settlers formed communities that would eventually populate Nebraska, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota—many of the states that would join the union by 1890. With the expedition's success, America's claim to land that stretched to the other "shining sea" was undeniable.

For opening up the West, Lewis and Clark remain legends—symbols of America's restless spirit of exploration. Following their example, millions of Americans would push boundaries into the unknown, keep going when all seemed lost, and like Sacagawea, go the extra mile to help strangers.

Looking over the gorgeous landscape of the American West, we remember that first, difficult journey and the values that made it successful.

Writing Task

If you had to build a shelter to keep you warm for a winter, what would you do?

Glossary

Camaraderie: Feelings of friendship and trust among people who spend a lot of time together.

Canoe: A narrow boat with pointed ends, propelled by paddles.

Capsized: When a boat turns over in the water.

Columbia River: A major river in the Pacific Northwest region of North America. Lewis and Clark reached it near the end of their trip west and used it to reach the Pacific Ocean in canoes.

Dialects: Different forms of a language spoken in particular regions or by specific groups of people.

Diplomacy: Skillful communication with the goal of keeping a relationship on good terms. Countries and their representatives practice diplomacy, but the skills transfer to smaller situations like Lewis and Clark's interactions with native tribes.

Decipher: To figure out something difficult to understand, like a code or a foreign language.

Fort Clatsop: The winter of 1805-1806 encampment for the Lewis and Clark expedition. Fort Clatsop was built near the mouth of the Columbia River near the Pacific Ocean, near modern-day Astoria, Oregon.

Fortification: A defensive structure built to protect against enemy attacks.

Great Falls: A series of waterfalls on the Missouri River that Lewis and Clark had to navigate around during their expedition.

Great Plains: A large area of flat land covered with grass, stretching across the central United States. The Great Plains stretch across Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and parts of Montana.

Invaluable: Extremely useful or important; priceless.

Keelboat: A large, flat-bottomed boat that was very stable. Keelboats were perfect for transporting goods and people down a gentle river.

Louisiana Purchase: A tremendous land acquisition by the United States from France in 1803. With one deal, the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the country.

Louisiana Territory: An unincorporated area of 828,000 square miles that stretched from the Mississippi River delta to modern-day Minnesota and out to modern-day Montana. The region was owned by Spain and France until Napoleon sold it to the United States in 1803.

Missouri River: The longest river in North America. The Missouri River stretches from St. Louis, where it meets the Mississippi River, up to the Continental Divide in Idaho, reaching roughly 2,341 miles in length.

Glossary

Mutiny: A rebellion—often by soldiers or sailors against their commanding officers.

Northwest Passage: An imaginary sea route that 18th-century Americans hoped would connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the Arctic Ocean.

Pirogue: Small, flat-bottomed boat similar to a canoe.

Portage: To carry boats and supplies overland between navigable waters.

Sacagawea: A young Lemhi Shoshone woman who joined the Lewis and Clark expedition as a guide and interpreter.

Territorial Governor: A person appointed to govern a territory, which is a region of land that is not yet a state.

Teton Sioux: One of three subcultures of the powerful Sioux Indian tribe. The Teton Sioux spoke a language called "Lakota" and occupied lands in the Great Lakes region and in North and South Dakota.

Toll: A fee or charge required to pass somewhere.

Waterway: A river, canal, or other body of water that boats or ships can travel through.

Westward Expansion: The movement of settlers and pioneers westward across the United States during the 19th century.

Yeoman: A farmer who owns and works on a small piece of land.

Sources

Andrews, Evan. "10 Little Known Facts of the Lewis and Clark Expedition." *History.com*. 14 August 2023. https://www.history.com/news/10-little-known-facts-about-the-lewis-and-clark-expedition. Accessed 10 December 2023.

Brandman, Marianna and Potter, Theresa. "Sacajawea." *National Women's History Museum*. 2021. https://www.womenshistory.org/education resources/biographies/sacagawea#:~:text=When%20she%20was%20approximately%2012,%2Dday%20Bismarck%2C%20North%20Dakota. Accessed 10 December 2023.

Buckley, Jay H. "Lewis and Clark Expedition: United States History." *Britannica.com*. https://www.britannica.com/event/Lewis-and-Clark-Expedition. Accessed 10 December 2023.

Buckley, Jay H. "Meriwether Lewis: American Explorer." *Britannica.com*. 29 November 2023. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Meriwether-Lewis. Accessed 10 December 2023.

Buckley, Jay H. "William Clark: American Explorer." *Britannica.com*. 18 December 2023. https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Clark. Accessed 10 December 2023.

Burns, Ken. "Lewis and Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery." *PBS*. 4 November 1997.

Edinger, Tom and Whitefield, Jim. *The Historic Expedition of Lewis and Clark*. Marshall Publishing & Promotions, Inc., 2018.

Editors of Biography.com. "Meriwether Lewis." *Biography.com*. 23 June 2021. https://www.biography.com/history-culture/meriwether-lewis. Accessed 10 December 2023.

Editors of History.com. "Lewis and Clark Return to St. Louis." *History.com*. 21 September 2020. https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/lewis-and-clark-return. Accessed 10 December 2023.

Editors of History. "Manifest Destiny." *History.com*. 15 November 2019. https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/manifest-destiny. Accessed 10 December 2023.

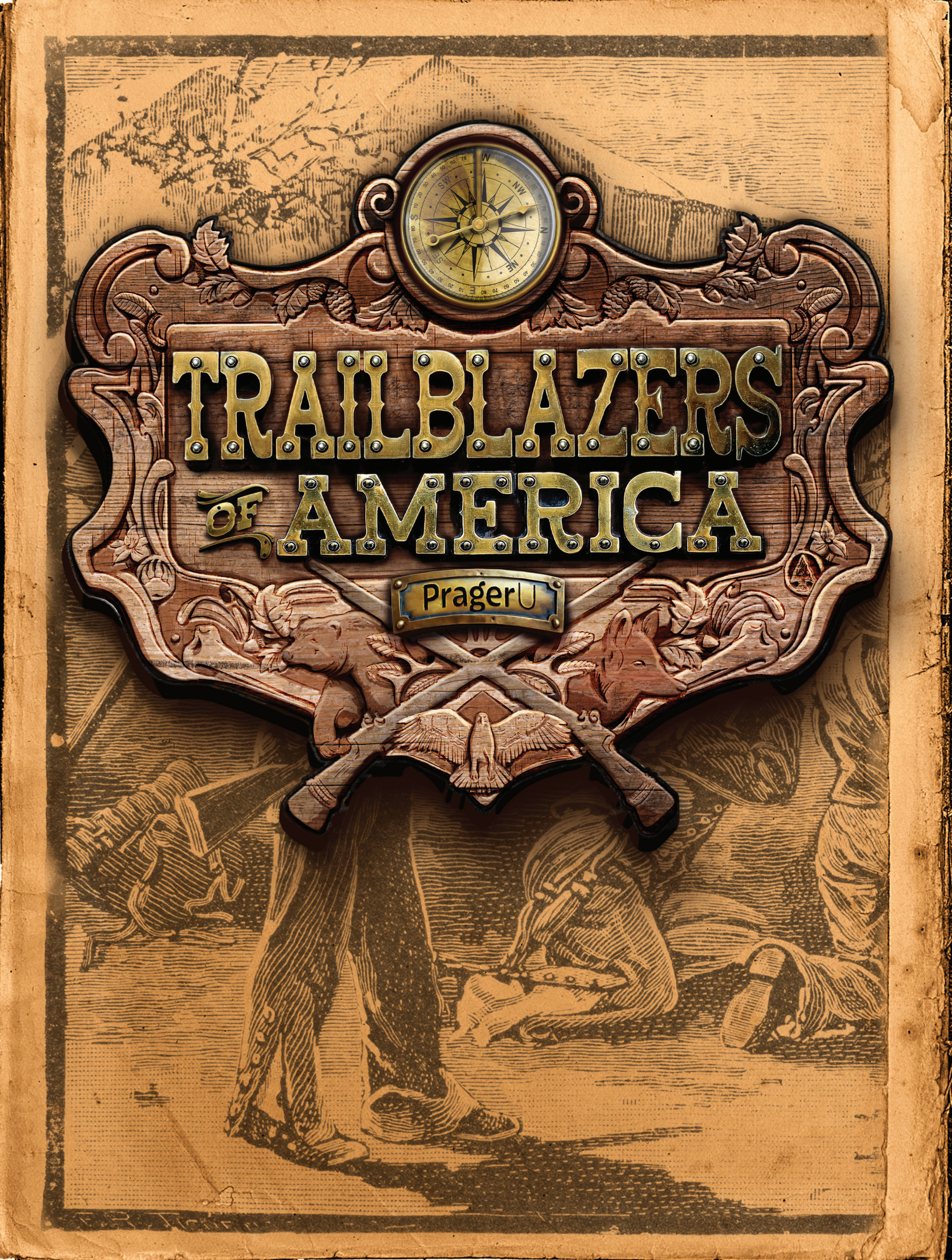
Editors of History. "The Lewis and Clark Expedition." *History.com*. 28 March 2023. https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/lewis-and-clark. Accessed 10 December 2023.

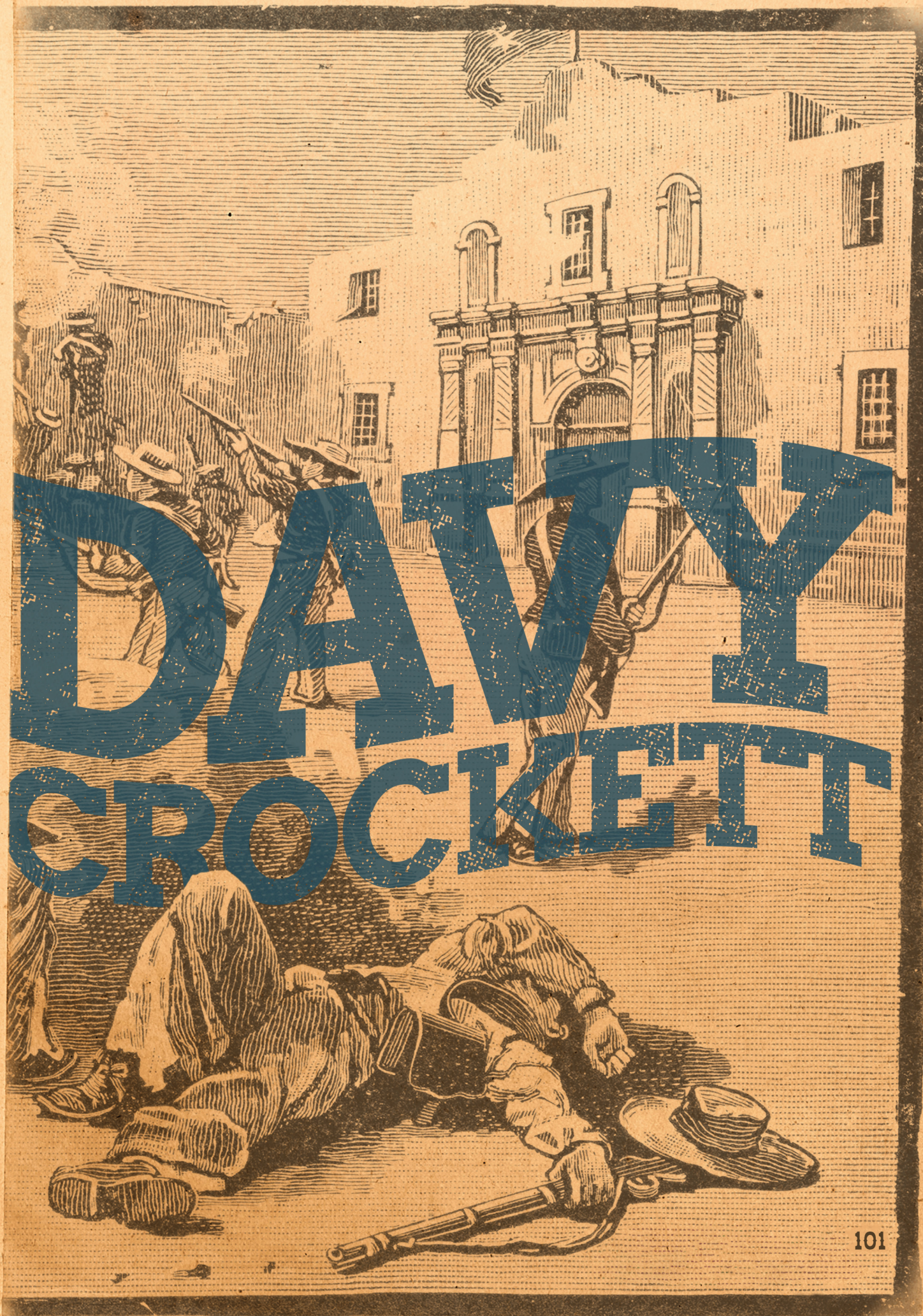
"Empire of Liberty." *Monticello*, www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/empire-liberty-quotation. Accessed 14 June 2024.

Fritz, Harvey W. "Synopsis of the Lewis and Clark Expedition." *Discover Lewis and Clark*. https://lewis-clark.org. Accessed 10 December 2023.

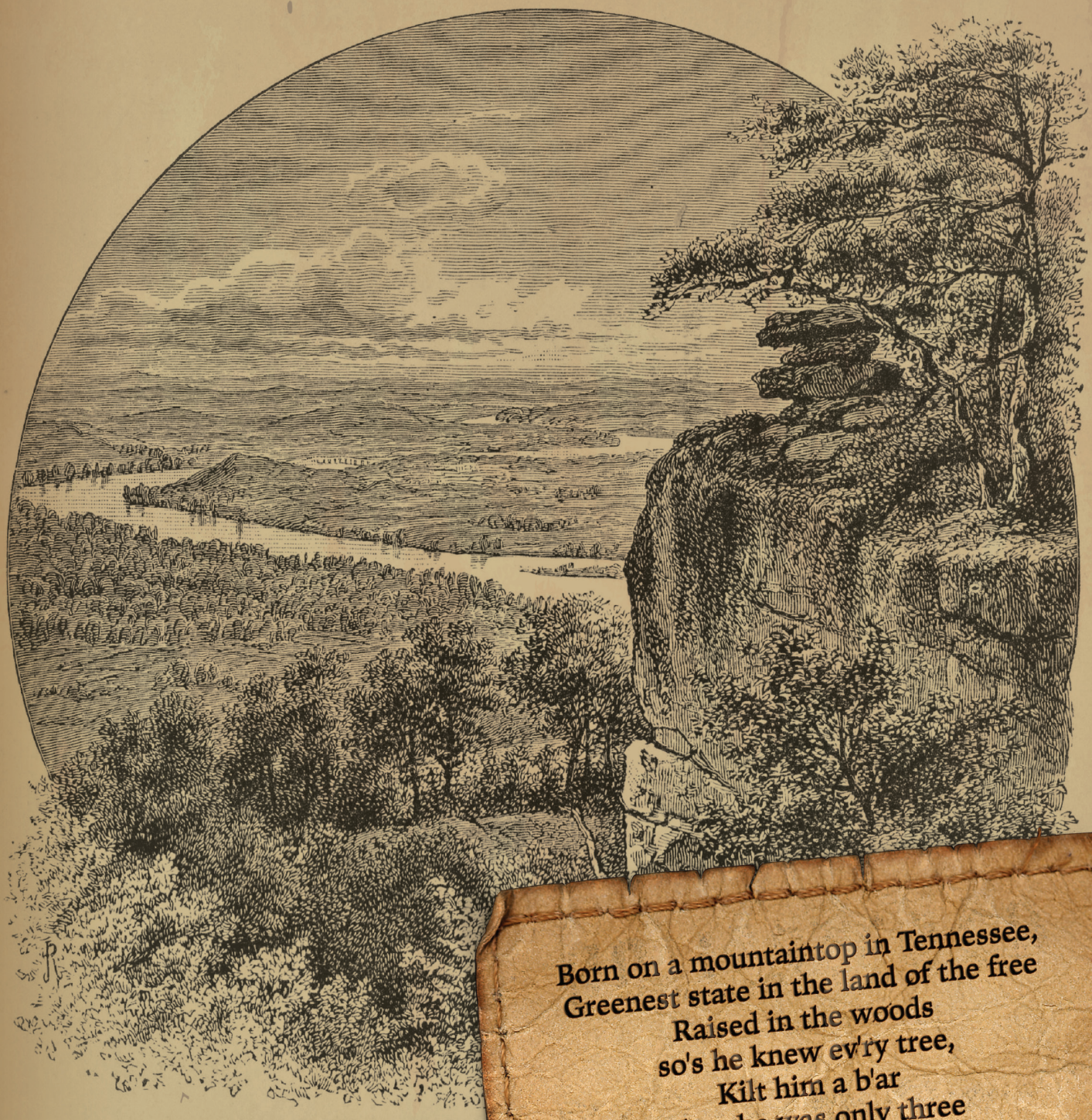
Kastor, Peter J. "The Lewis and Clark Expedition." *Encyclopedia Virginia*. 07 December 2020. https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/lewis-and-clark-expedition-the/. Accessed 10 December 2023.

"Thomas Jefferson, Land, and Liberty." *UVA Engagement*, 8 June 2020, engagement.virginia.edu/learn/2020/06/08/thomas-jefferson-land-and-liberty. Accessed 14 June 2024.


TRAILBLAZERS
OF AMERICA
PragerU


DAVY
CROCKETT


DAVY
CROCKETT



Born on a mountaintop in Tennessee,
Greenest state in the land of the free
Raised in the woods
so's he knew ev'ry tree,
Kilt him a b'ar
when he was only three
Davy, Davy Crockett,
king of the wild frontier

-From "The Ballad of Davy Crockett."
music by George Burns and lyrics by Thomas Blackburn

Homesick

Near Rockbridge, Virginia, winter of 1798

Davy shivered in the cold. The blanket of snow was already up to his knees, and the thick falling flakes made it difficult to see what was ahead of him. With every step, the 13-year-old could feel the icy moisture seeping through his shoes and clothes.

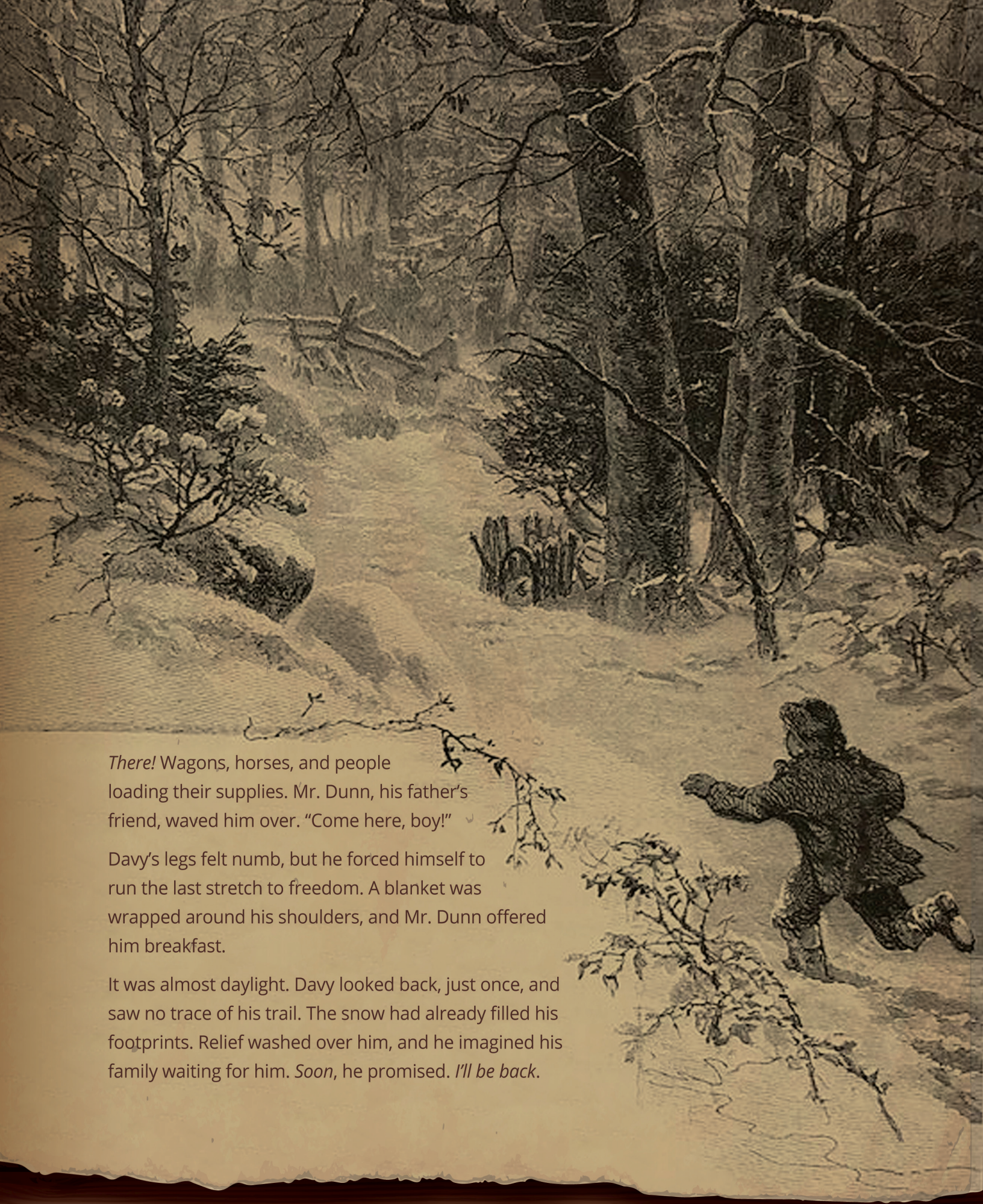
I don't have much time, he thought, his panic rising. *I'm going to freeze if I don't make it to the pass.*

He'd left his master's house maybe an hour or two ago, and Davy knew he had come too far to turn back. It wasn't that Mr. Siler had overworked him or been cruel, but he had pressured Davy to stay and not return to his family. The job Davy promised to finish had been completed, and this was his chance to escape and get home.

Earlier in the day, a group of wagons had passed by the Silers' farm, and the riders stopped to chat. Remarkably, one of the drivers, a Mr. Dunn, knew Davy's father, and he said their journey was going to take them past the Crockett family tavern. Davy told the man about his situation with the Silers and how badly he wanted to go home. The man said they'd be camping at the pass and leaving at daybreak. They wouldn't wait a second, but there was room for Davy if he could find them before they left.

Davy ached from all the shivering, but the thought of seeing his family and sitting by a warm fire in the tavern was stronger than the pain. *Keep going. You gotta make it.*

He put one foot in front of the other. *Crunch, crunch, crunch*. The road was covered the same as everything else, but it cut an unmistakable path through the trees. Davy followed it until...



There! Wagons, horses, and people loading their supplies. Mr. Dunn, his father's friend, waved him over. "Come here, boy!"

Davy's legs felt numb, but he forced himself to run the last stretch to freedom. A blanket was wrapped around his shoulders, and Mr. Dunn offered him breakfast.

It was almost daylight. Davy looked back, just once, and saw no trace of his trail. The snow had already filled his footprints. Relief washed over him, and he imagined his family waiting for him. *Soon*, he promised. *I'll be back*.

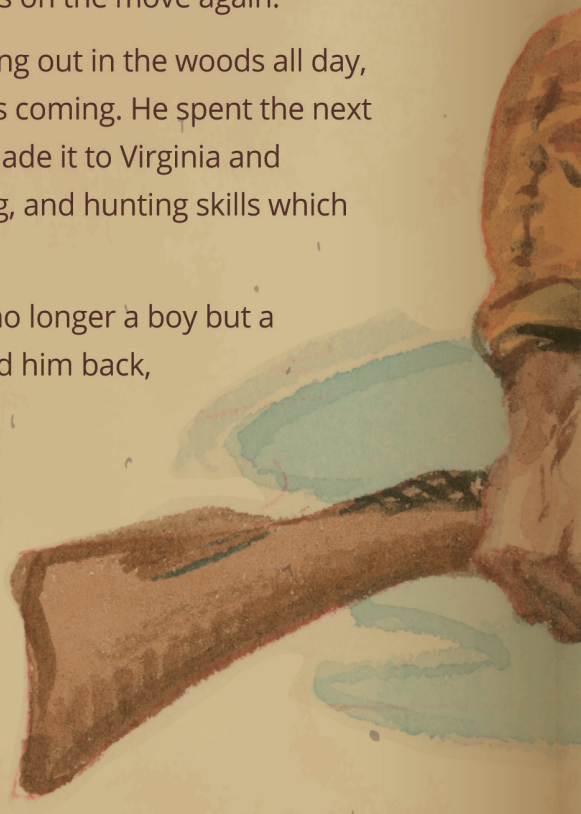
Meet Davy Crockett

The legendary folk hero, remembered as Davy Crockett, was born as David Crockett on August 17, 1786. He was indeed born in Tennessee, though he likely didn't kill a bear when he was only three. Davy grew up in a poor family and had eight other siblings. His grandmother and grandfather Crockett had been killed by Indians before he was born, and his father had fought for American independence. With money tight, when Davy was about 12, his father hired him out to a man named Jacob Siler, who needed help driving his cattle from Tennessee to Virginia.

After the job was done, Mr. Siler pressured Davy to stay, and he was too afraid to disobey. But after several weeks, the boy was homesick and made his daring escape during a snowstorm to get back to his father's tavern. Thanks to Mr. Dunn, Davy did make it home, but it wasn't long before the restless boy was on the move again.

When his father found out he was skipping school and hiding out in the woods all day, Davy ran away to avoid the harsh punishment he knew was coming. He spent the next few years roaming the state, working odd jobs, and even made it to Virginia and Maryland. During this time, he honed his scouting, shooting, and hunting skills which would later make him famous.

At around 16 years old, Davy returned to his family again, no longer a boy but a young man. They barely recognized him but gladly accepted him back, and he worked hard and helped his father get out of debt.



In 1806, Davy married Polly Finley, and they would have three children together. The young family's homestead was in Franklin County, Tennessee, but was named "Kentuck." Life was good, and Davy cared deeply for his family and farm. So, in 1813, when nearby settlers were massacred by violent Indians, he volunteered as a soldier in the **Creek War**.



A Nation at War

The War of 1812 was a military conflict fought over North American land. At the time, territory ownership was divided between the United States and Old World European powers Great Britain and Spain. America had expanded its borders and grown to 18 states, but thanks to the freedom it provided its citizens, the young nation's population was exploding, and more land was desired. Britain controlled lands to the north and west, and the Spanish controlled lands to the south and west, but despite some forts, trading posts, and some towns around the edges, European-controlled territories held a tiny amount of people compared to their massive size. These lands were lightly populated, but they weren't empty.

As they had for centuries, Indian tribes freely roamed the British and Spanish-held regions of North America. When border wars broke out between the Americans, British, and Spanish, the Indians were caught in the middle, and different tribes began choosing sides. Indians who hoped to maintain their traditional ways of living mostly made alliances with the Europeans and agreed to fight against the Americans. However, many Indians recognized the young nation's growing power. They understood there was no way of stopping its rapidly growing population and allied with the United States.

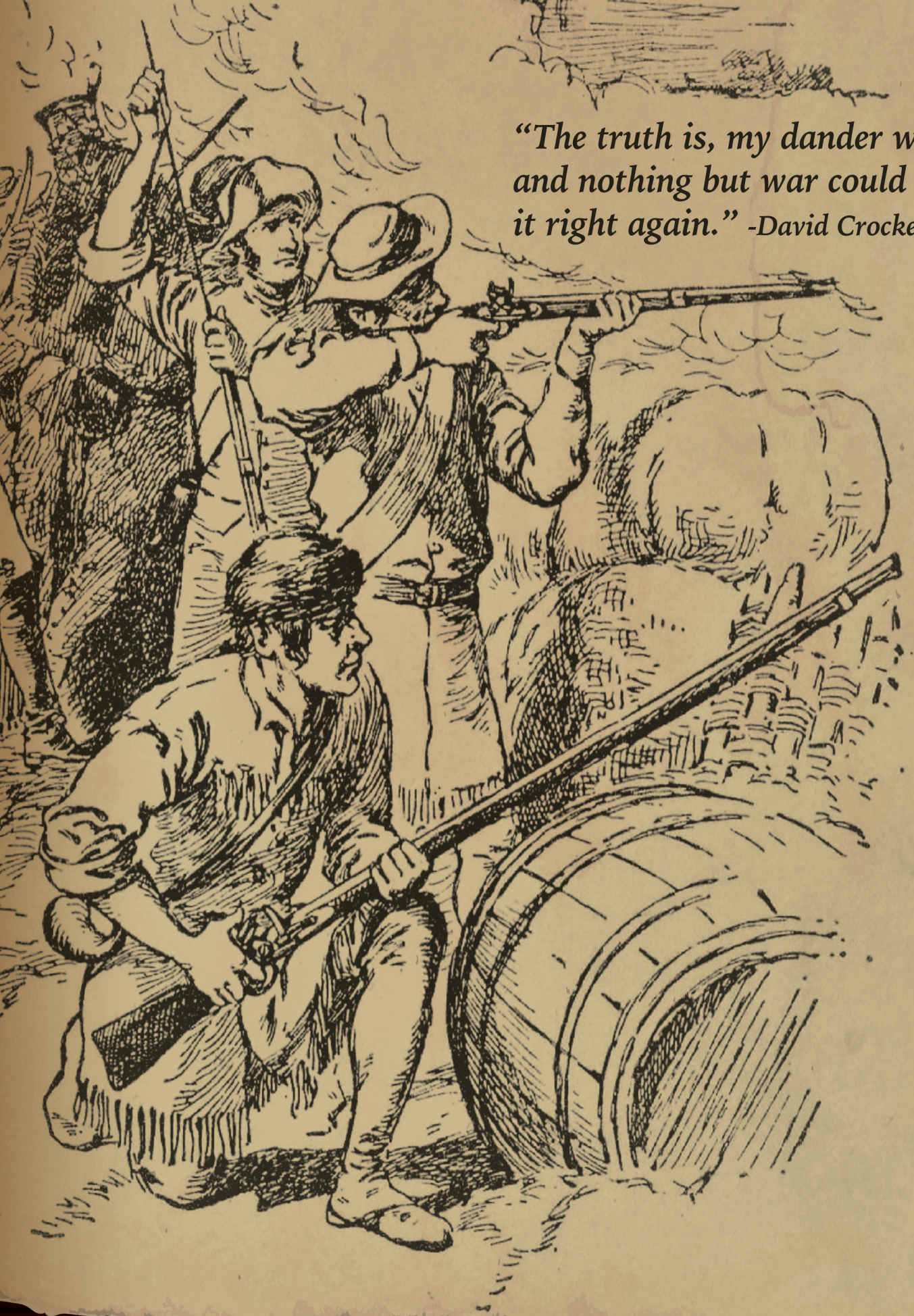
Many Indian tribes were split over whether to support the Americans or the Europeans. One example was the **Creek tribe**, who lived in present-day Alabama and Georgia.

With American settlers encroaching on their territories, the Creek were divided over whether to embrace the United States and its culture, or resist its expansion and attempt to hold onto traditional ways. The division resulted in a violent civil war within the tribe, and one militant faction of the tribe called the **Red Sticks** escalated tensions by attacking the American-controlled **Fort Mims** in Alabama.



The attack on Fort Mims was unexpected, vicious, and brutal. The Red Sticks destroyed the fort, and hundreds were ruthlessly killed. Among the victims were not just American women and children but also fellow Creek people who were friendly with the U.S. Of those killed, approximately 250 were **scalped**, and over 100 women, children, and black slaves were taken as prisoners by the Red Sticks.

The attack on Fort Mims, and especially its brutality, sent shockwaves throughout the United States, stirring the nation to respond. At the time, most of the U.S. military was fighting against the British and their Indian allies in the north, but in response to the Fort Mims massacre, American troops led by General Andrew Jackson were sent south to fight the Red Sticks. To assist Jackson's troops, a **militia** of Tennessee volunteers formed, and among them was Davy Crockett. His wife begged him not to go, but Davy felt it was his duty to protect his family, his community, and America.



"The truth is, my dander was up, and nothing but war could bring it right again." -David Crockett

Scouting the Enemy

Near Creek Territory, present-day Alabama, 1813

"Sir, the Red Sticks are on the move, and they're heading for General Jackson," Davy explained to the colonel.

"Thank you for the report. That'll be all for now, Crockett," Colonel Coffee said calmly without looking up from his paperwork.

The colonel was dismissing him. *I can't believe this!* Davy clenched his fists and tried to keep his tone respectful. "Sir, what are we going to do about it?"

Colonel Coffee's head raised sharply, his eyes set ablaze. "How dare you question me?" he asked rhetorically. "We'll wait until we hear from Major Gibson. We need more information."

More information? What more does he need? Davy fumed. The colonel had chosen him to go with Major Gibson and his men to serve as a guide. *Why doesn't he trust me?* While scouting out some enemy territory, Davy had been separated from the rest, and he suspected they were dead. The peaceful Indian villages they had come across on their scouting trip were abandoned, with the fires still burning. Red Sticks were near, and Davy sensed where they were heading.

Sitting here and waiting could cost lives.

Davy left Colonel Coffee's tent before he said something he'd regret. That night, he slept with his flintlock rifle loaded and under his arm.

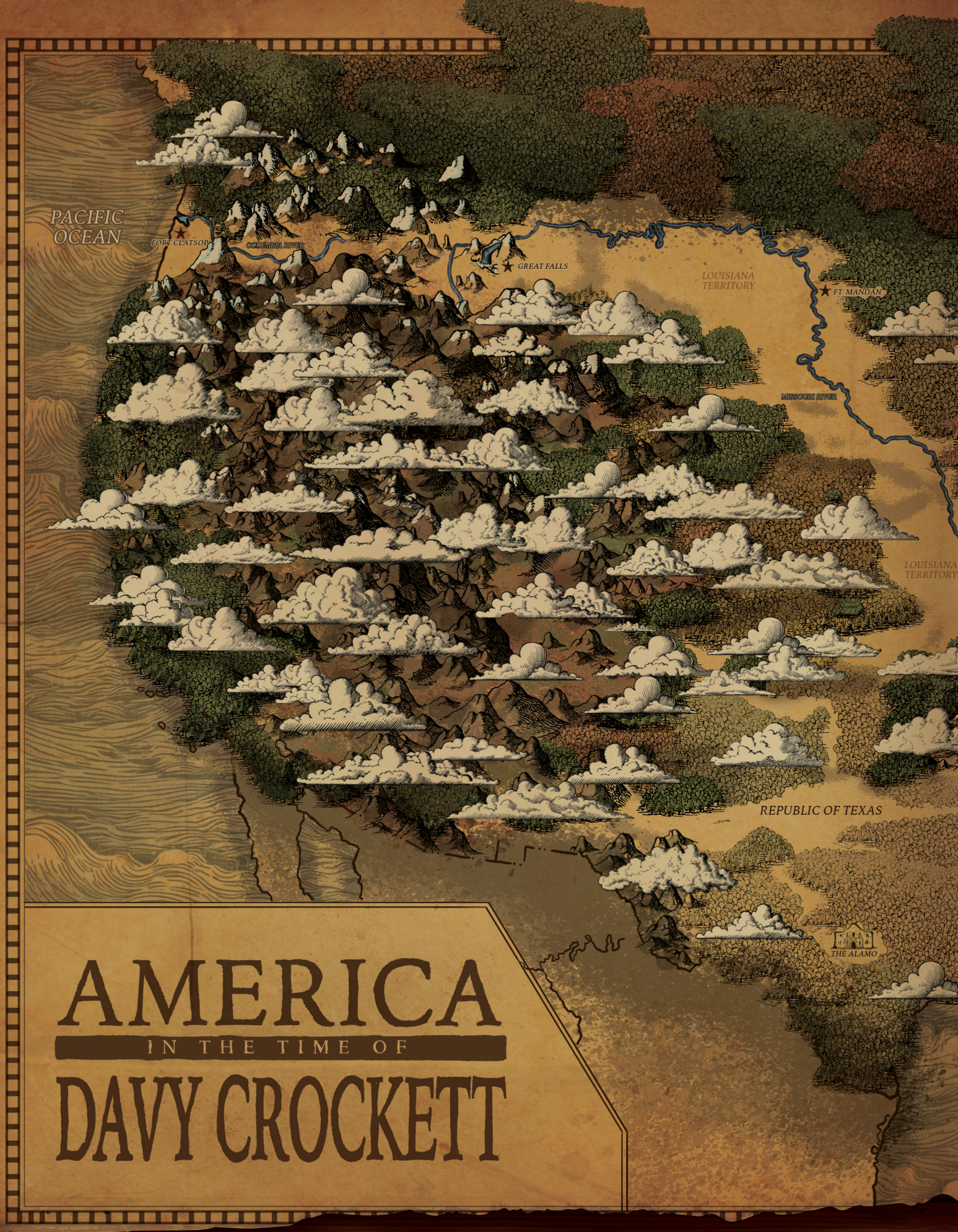
In the morning, Davy awoke to a loud commotion. With gun in hand, he bolted out of his tent and headed towards a group of soldiers who were gathered around Colonel Coffee's tent. It was Major Gibson and his men.

As Davy approached the gathering, Colonel Coffee turned to address the camp. "Major Gibson has informed me that the Red Sticks are headed towards General Jackson and his men."

So he believed the Major but not me, Davy thought bitterly. *Just because I'm not an officer*. It hurt more than he wanted to admit. He'd proven himself time and again, scouting and hunting for the militia, but that wasn't enough for the colonel.

What Davy loved most about America was that it was a place where ability and knowledge were supposed to matter more than rank. He would not forget his encounter with Colonel Coffee. While he understood the importance of rank within the military, he knew then that he wanted to be a voice for those not heard.




PACIFIC OCEAN
FORT CLATSOP
COLUMBIA RIVER
GREAT FALLS
LOUISIANA TERRITORY
FT. MANDAN
MISSOURI RIVER
LOUISIANA TERRITORY
REPUBLIC OF TEXAS
THE ALAMO
AMERICA
IN THE TIME OF
DAVY CROCKETT


VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
WISCONSIN TERRITORY
BOSTON
MASSACHUSETTS
NEW YORK
RHODE ISLAND
MICHIGAN TERRITORY
NEW YORK CITY
CONNECTICUT
DETROIT
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
CHICAGO
Appalachian Mountains
NEW JERSEY
PHILADELPHIA
OHIO
PENNSYLVANIA
INDIANA
DELAWARE
ILLINOIS
D.C.
MARYLAND
OHIO RIVER
VIRGINIA
ST. LOUIS
KENTUCKY
CUMBERLAND GAP
NORTH CAROLINA
TENNESSEE
Appalachian Mountains
SOUTH CAROLINA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CHARLESTON
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
LOUISIANA
FT. MIMS
NEW ORLEANS
FLORIDA TERRITORY

From Soldier to Politician

Following his scouting mission, Davy's regiment was able to meet up with General Andrew Jackson and join his troops fighting the Red Sticks. Davy saw action in the **Battle of Tallushatchee**, which was retaliation for the tragedy at Fort Mims. He also fought in the **Battle of Talladega**, where General Jackson and the U.S. Army rescued their Creek allies from the attacking Red Sticks. Roughly 150 American-friendly Creek Indians had been surrounded at Fort Leslie by 700 Red Sticks. Crockett was among approximately 1,200 infantrymen under Jackson's command. They arrived before the Red Sticks attacked, and the American military routed their Indian opponents. By the end of the battle, Jackson lost only 15 men, and roughly 300 Red Sticks were dead.

The Creek War ended with American victory, and Davy's volunteer service came to an end. He returned home to his family for a time, but since the greater War of 1812 continued, Crockett reenlisted and was sent to rejoin General Jackson who was fighting in Spanish-controlled Florida. Jackson and his men drove the British and Spanish out, and Davy was sent into the Florida swamps to find any remaining Red Sticks and their allies who supported the British.

With major American victories in Baltimore and New Orleans, the war ended, and so did Davy's military service. But the frontiersman's lifelong restlessness remained, so he decided to take on a new fight: politics.

Beginning in 1821, Davy began a 15-year period of winning and losing political races. His collective time in office amounted to 10 years in the Tennessee Legislature or the House of Representatives. During his time in political office, Davy took a strong interest in protecting

the common man rather than the wealthy. With the violent Red Sticks removed, it took much less courage to live in Tennessee, and rich people began flooding the state. Davy fought for land rights laws to benefit those who paved the way for these wealthy newcomers to comfortably move in.

Known for his storytelling skills, Davy spun wonderful tales of his time on the frontier, making him the unofficial **spokesperson** for his fellow frontiersmen. He was a great speaker and wasn't afraid to stand up for what he believed in... even when it cost him everything.



A FIELD GUIDE TO

SOUTHEAST & TEXAS ANIMALS



EASTERN CORAL SNAKE

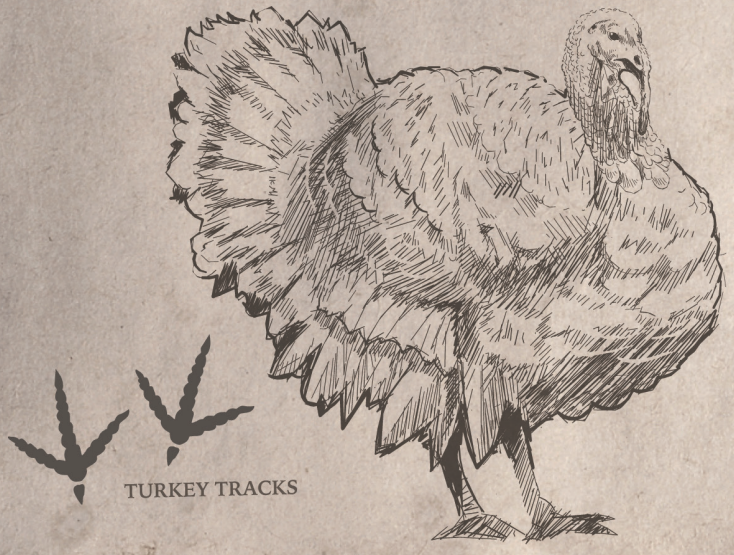
A snake species that is endemic, meaning only found in, the southeastern United States. There are other species of coral snakes found elsewhere in the Americas and the Caribbean. The eastern coral is highly venomous and consists of three colors, black, red, and yellow. Other species of snakes mimic the same coloration of the eastern coral, so children are often taught the following rhyme to distinguish which ones are safe or dangerous: "Red and yellow can kill a fellow; red and black is a friend of Jack."





NORTH AMERICAN RACCOON

A small mammal that is commonly found throughout North America. These mammals are known for the black mask around their eyes and their bushy, ringed tails. They can be found in forest areas or cities, wherever there is an abundance of food for them to find. Raccoons are nocturnal, meaning they are active at night. They are also good swimmers and climbers. Davy Crockett was known for wearing a cap made from the hide of a raccoon.



WILD TURKEY

A large, plump bird with a long neck, small head, and wide tail. Their feathers can be bronze-green, white, and brown. The males are called "toms," and they tend to be bigger and have a distinctive gobbling sound they make! Females are called "hens," and they tend to be smaller and darker in coloration than males. Turkeys are native to the Americas and enjoy forest habitats where they can forage for nuts, berries, and insects. Though they are birds, they can only fly short distances and can run surprisingly fast—up to 25 miles per hour.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

SOUTHEAST & TEXAS PLANTS



COTTON PLANT

A shrub that grows a soft, fluffy white fiber often used to make clothing or other textiles. It's a highly profitable crop and was widely grown in the American South during the 1800s after the invention of the cotton gin. Many cotton plantations during this time were worked by African American slaves.

SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA

An evergreen tree that is native to the southeastern United States. The tree tends to grow near bodies of water or swamps, reaching heights of up to 90-100 feet, sometimes more. It has green leaves and large, fragrant white flowers.





INDIAN PINK

A wildflower native to the southeastern and midwestern United States. It grows in moist, wooded areas or along streams. The flowers are comprised of a red tube that blooms with a yellow star shape at its tip. Native Americans commonly used this flower for its medicinal properties.

President Jackson, The Indian Removal Act, & Trail of Tears

Davy Crockett was not the only veteran of the Creek War to represent Tennessee as a politician in Washington D.C. General Jackson served as a U.S. Senator, and riding his enormous popularity and fame, the man the Red Sticks had called "Sharp Knife" became the nation's 7th president in 1829.

During Crockett and Jackson's time as political leaders, figuring out what to do with the Indians who lived in their home region of the American Southeast was an enormous challenge. Attracted to the rich and productive soils of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia, waves of recent American settlers moved in at higher rates than ever before, and their continued push westward created tension. Indians who chose to maintain traditional native ways of living clashed —often violently—with settlers, and attacks on each other were frequent. However, many Indians decided to try and adopt American culture and follow American laws. Some were able to adapt to new ways of living and fit into American society, but racism towards Indians was common amongst whites, and many Indians suffered mistreatment no matter their efforts to follow American customs and laws.

The Cherokee, Seminole, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw Indians were known as the **Five Civilized Tribes**, and most of them had made peace treaties with the U.S. government. However, President Jackson did not believe the government had the resources to protect the Indians and prevent mistreatment from white settlers. Jackson's solution was the **Indian Removal Act of 1830**, which offered lands west of the Mississippi River to Indian tribes in exchange for their lands in the Southeast. For those who left willingly, the government would pay them and cover transportation costs, and they could govern themselves in the lands reserved for

them out west. Those who declined the offer and remained in the Southeast would not only lose their land to the U.S. state authorities, but also have to abide by American laws.

Many Indians of the American Southeast moved voluntarily and took advantage of the U.S. government's relocation assistance, but some fought removal till the bitter end. The Cherokees in particular tried fighting legally with lawsuits against the U.S. government. They had adopted many settler ways—such as writing a constitution, opening schools, owning black slaves, and even having a newspaper in their own language—but their efforts were not enough. The U.S. Supreme Court also recognized Cherokee independence and **sovereignty** from state authority, but the ruling was ignored. The U.S. military eventually forced the Cherokee to relocate, and their long, harsh journey westward became known as the **Trail of Tears**.

Whether willing or not, between 1830 and 1850, an estimated 100,000 Indians moved westward from the Southeast, and roughly 15,000 died along the way. Davy Crockett openly criticized Jackson's actions and disagreed with many policies enacted toward the Indians. Thanks to Jackson's heavy popularity and support, opposing him was political suicide, and Crockett lost popularity. He lost a re-election campaign in 1835, and that was the end of Davy's career in politics.



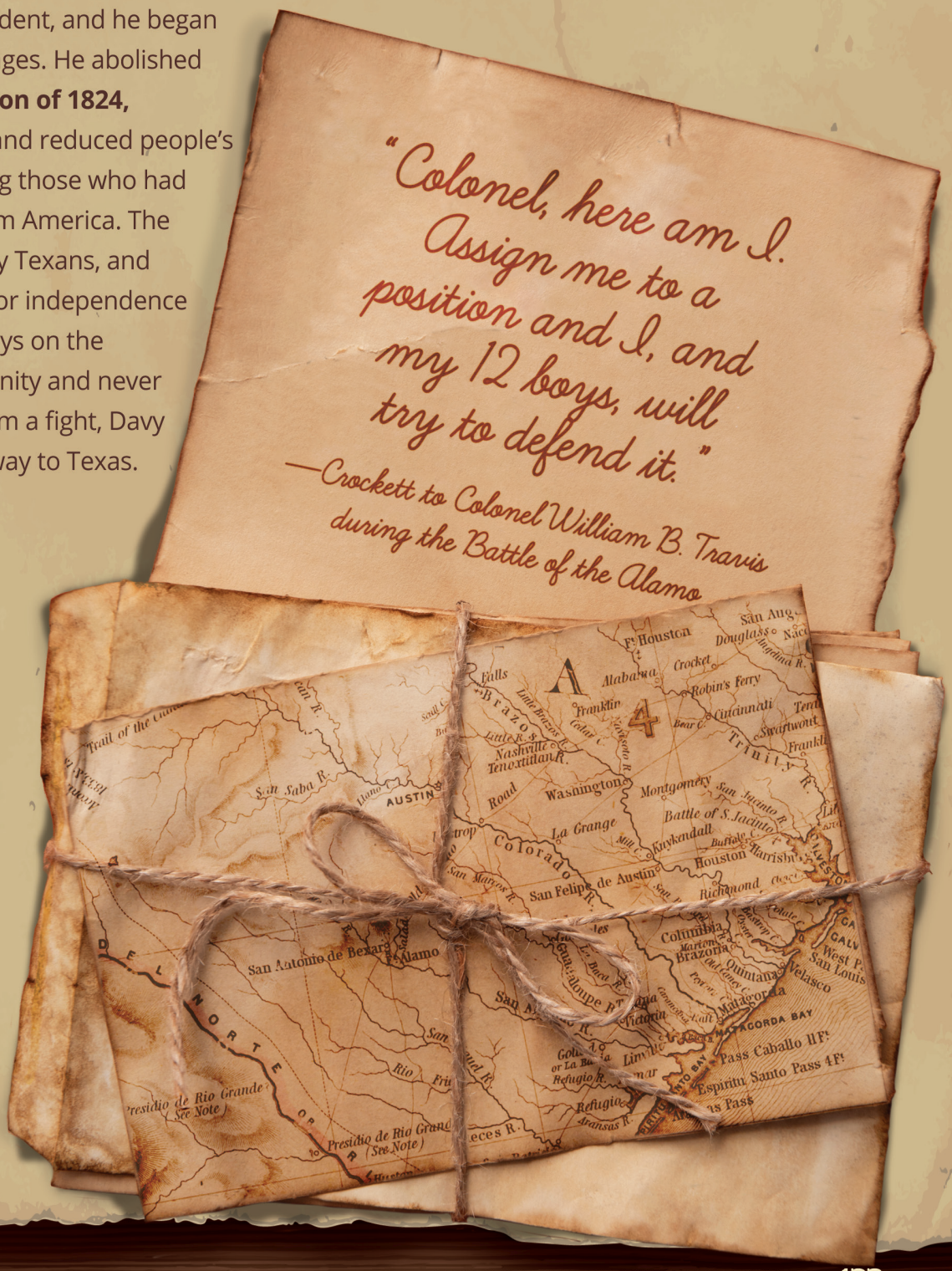
On to a New Frontier: Texas

In the 1820s and 30s, Texas was much like Tennessee had been when Davy was a child—a land with few people, fewer laws, and lots of opportunity. Texas was the northeast part of Mexican territory, but despite having an enormous amount of land good for farming and ranching, very few Mexicans lived there. This was largely because Texas was home to violent Indian tribes, including the especially ruthless **Comanche**, who were quick to terrorize those who dared settle on their hunting grounds.

The Mexican government hoped to pacify or push out the Indians who roamed freely in Texas, but they needed settlers to accomplish this. Not enough Mexican citizens were willing to take the risk it required, so the Mexican government turned to their eastern neighbor. Because of continued European immigration, America's population kept growing rapidly. States like Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, which had once been the frontier, were getting increasingly crowded, and land became less affordable. The frontier was now further west, and so to help with their Indian problem, Mexico began offering land in Texas to Americans brave (or crazy) enough to settle it.

Whether desperate for land, freedom, or both, Mexico's offer was attractive to many, and people began crossing into Texas from America. Indian raids were common, but settlers kept coming. For about a decade, the relationship between new Texans and the Mexican government was relatively smooth.

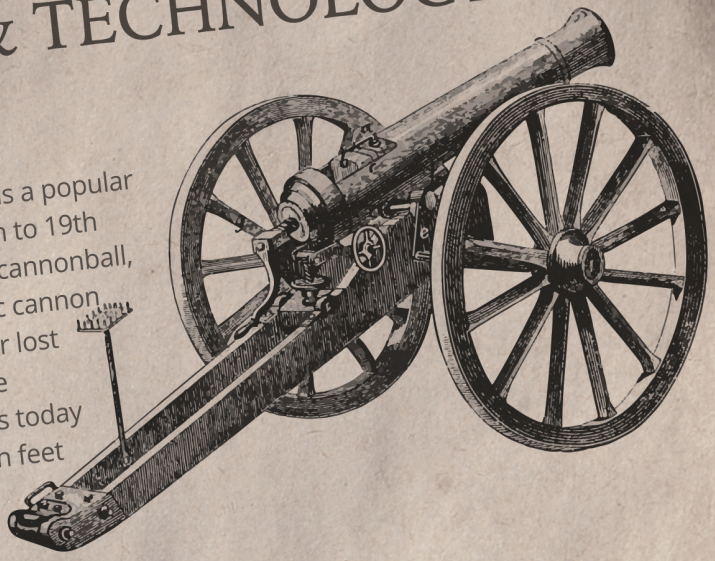
In 1833, Mexico elected Antonio López de Santa Anna as president, and he began making drastic changes. He abolished Mexico's **Constitution of 1824,** centralized power, and reduced people's freedoms—including those who had moved to Texas from America. The changes upset many Texans, and rumors of fighting for independence began to swirl. Always on the lookout for opportunity and never one to shy away from a fight, Davy Crockett made his way to Texas.



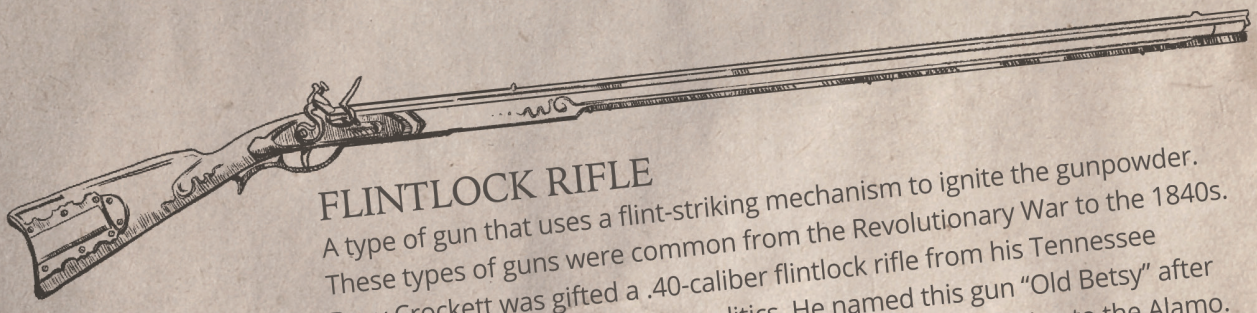
A FIELD GUIDE TO

SOUTHEAST & TEXAS WEAPONRY & TECHNOLOGY

18-POUNDER CANNON

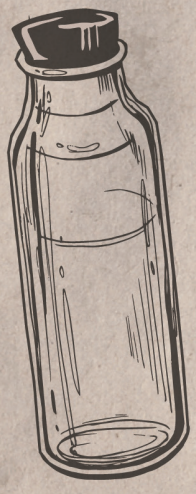


Also known as the 18-pounder long gun, this was a popular weapon used by European navies from the 17th to 19th centuries. It was capable of firing an 18-pound cannonball, thus giving it its name. This was the most iconic cannon used in the Battle of the Alamo, and it was later lost to history. The Alamo Museum was able to use historical records to create a replica that exists today for people to visit. The replica measures seven feet eight inches long and weighs 2,000 pounds.



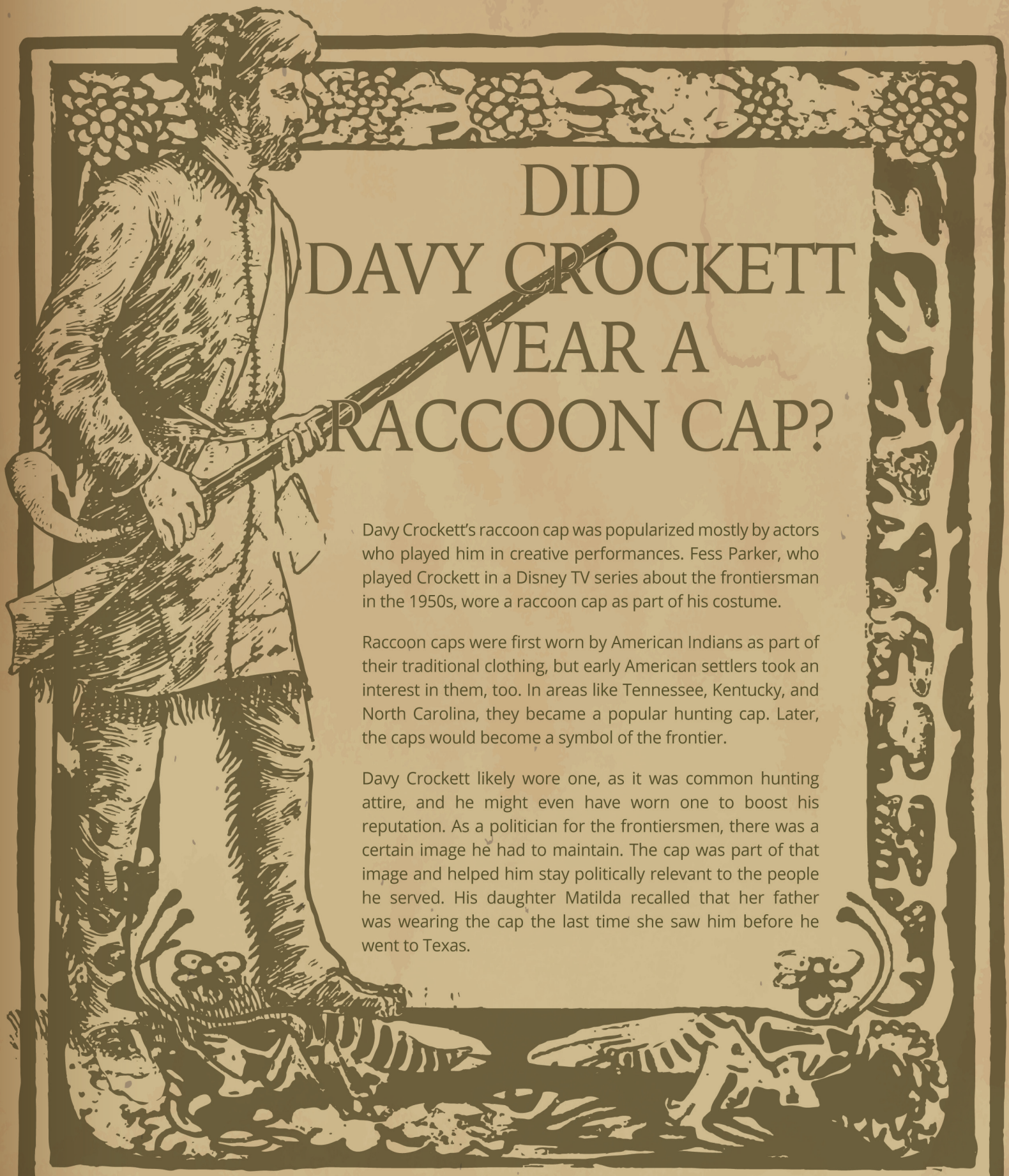
FLINTLOCK RIFLE

A type of gun that uses a flint-striking mechanism to ignite the gunpowder. These types of guns were common from the Revolutionary War to the 1840s. Davy Crockett was gifted a .40-caliber flintlock rifle from his Tennessee constituents during his time in politics. He named this gun "Old Betsy" after his wife or sister, and he left the rifle with his son before going to the Alamo.



BATEMAN'S DROPS

Also known as Dr. Bateman's Pectoral Drops, this was a common remedy for colds, fevers, and other aches and pains in Great Britain and North America from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Crockett wrote in his autobiography about being very ill and staying with a stranger who gave him these drops. The stranger thought he was going to die and was shocked when Crockett started to get better. In fact, word had already spread to his family that he had died, so when Crockett returned home after recovering, his family thought he'd been resurrected!



DID DAVY CROCKETT WEAR A RACCOON CAP?

Davy Crockett's raccoon cap was popularized mostly by actors who played him in creative performances. Fess Parker, who played Crockett in a Disney TV series about the frontiersman in the 1950s, wore a raccoon cap as part of his costume.

Raccoon caps were first worn by American Indians as part of their traditional clothing, but early American settlers took an interest in them, too. In areas like Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina, they became a popular hunting cap. Later, the caps would become a symbol of the frontier.

Davy Crockett likely wore one, as it was common hunting attire, and he might even have worn one to boost his reputation. As a politician for the frontiersmen, there was a certain image he had to maintain. The cap was part of that image and helped him stay politically relevant to the people he served. His daughter Matilda recalled that her father was wearing the cap the last time she saw him before he went to Texas.



Battle of the Alamo

The Alamo, San Antonio, Texas, March 1836

Davy awoke to shouts and gunfire. It was still dark out, but the coal-black sky was slowly shifting to the blue-gray light of dawn. He raced to his post and climbed the wall to get a better view of the commotion.

Santa Anna and the Mexican Army were advancing. *How did the sentries miss this?* Not a single warning had been issued. Davy lifted his gun, took aim, and began firing. Even in the murky light, his shots hit with deadly accuracy.

Breathe in, hold, pull—reload. Breathe in, hold, pull...

His muscles were moving on memory and habit, and each Mexican that met Davy's aim met their maker. All his years in the woods and his time in the Creek War had prepared him for this. His body knew what to do in the face of danger. In the back of his mind, Davy knew they were outnumbered at least ten to one, but fear didn't register. Adrenaline coursed through him as he took out the enemy one by one. The Mexicans marched in columns, making them big, slow-moving targets—but there were so many of them...

For 12 days, the Mexican Army had remained at a distance, but after almost two weeks of standoffs and minor skirmishes, the battle was finally here. Now, it was time to see what these boastful Texans were made of.

"North wall!" someone shouted in a panic. "They've breached the north wall!"

Davy spun around and saw the enemy soldiers climbing onto the fort's protective wall, overwhelming the few men stationed there. *Here we go. This is it...*

Davy didn't freeze or try to run away and hide. He charged into battle, determined to fend off his attackers. He believed in the oath he had signed, and like those who had fought for freedom before him, he would fight against tyranny until his last breath.

Texan War for Independence

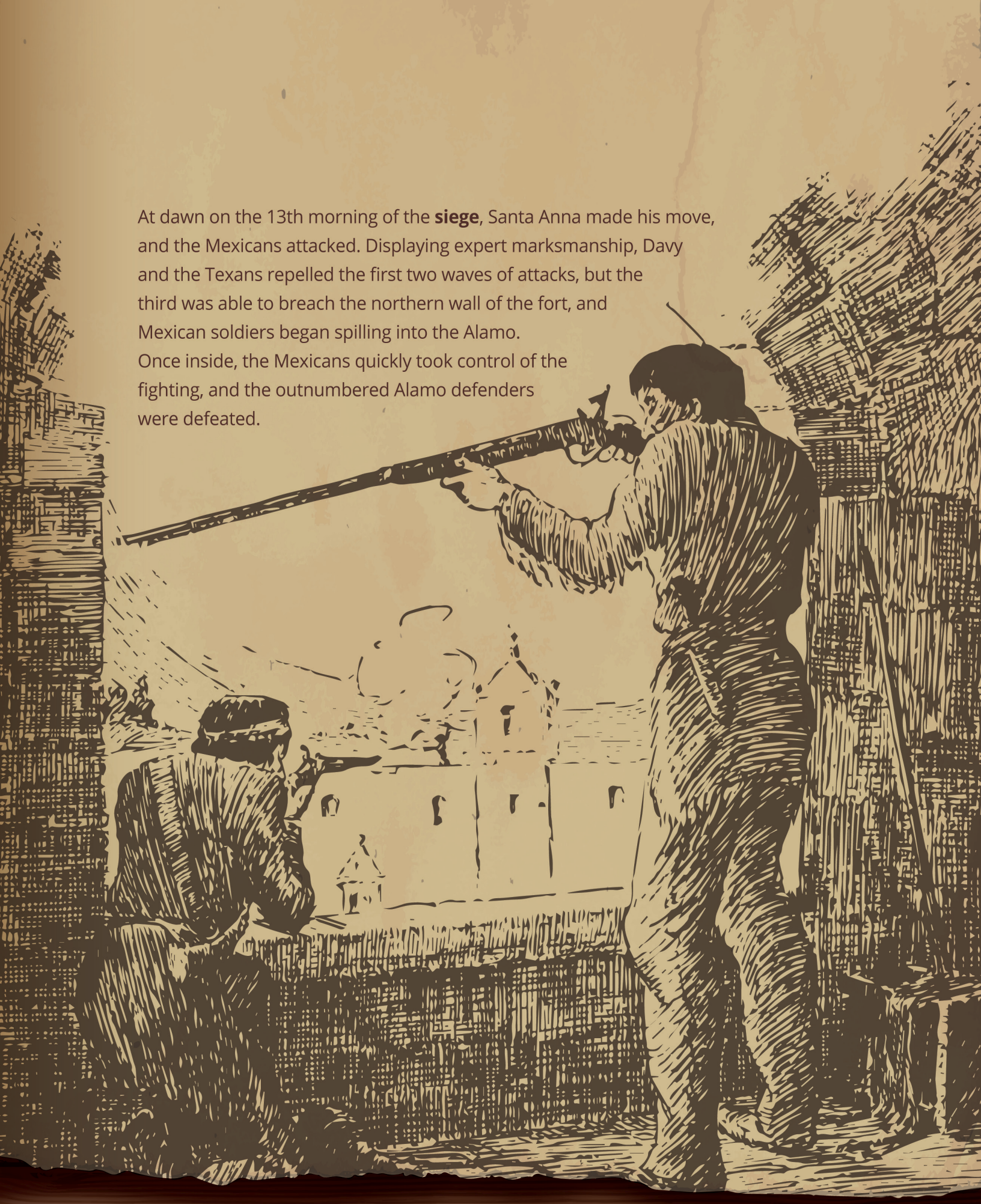
On October 2, 1835, the **Texas Revolution** began when shots were fired in the town of Gonzalez. It was a rebellion against the **Centralist Republic of Mexico** by colonists who had moved in from the United States, and Hispanic Texans called Tejanos. Not long after fighting began, Davy arrived in Texas with a group of about 30 volunteer fighters from Tennessee. For their service, the men were each promised 4,600 acres of Texas land, but before the agreement was official, they were required to sign an oath of allegiance. The oath read, "To the Provisional Government of Texas or any future republican Government that may hereafter be dared."

Crockett had the word "republican" inserted before he would sign. Davy would only support a new government if it was a **republic**; he wouldn't serve a tyrannical system where people had no control over how they were governed.

Once an official member of the **Texian Army**, Davy made his way to San Antonio to help reinforce an area the Texans had captured a few months before. Texian Army leadership viewed San Antonio as the gateway to the frontier and, therefore, a strategically important location for victory. With Davy among San Antonio's defenders, the Texans numbered about 200 fighting men. Unfortunately, the Mexican Army also valued the location, and more than 2,000 soldiers, led by President Santa Anna himself, were on their way to try and take it.

When Santa Anna and his forces arrived in San Antonio, the Texans were severely outnumbered and unprepared. In response to the Mexicans' arrival, they took cover inside a walled military fort called **the Alamo**, which had been built around an old Spanish mission. The Alamo was well fortified, including 18 cannons, but the Mexicans were easily able to completely surround the Texans and keep them inside. For 12 days, the Mexicans waited and plotted their attack, and during that time, Santa Anna ordered a red flag be raised, telling those inside the Alamo that none would be shown mercy.

At dawn on the 13th morning of the **siege**, Santa Anna made his move, and the Mexicans attacked. Displaying expert marksmanship, Davy and the Texans repelled the first two waves of attacks, but the third was able to breach the northern wall of the fort, and Mexican soldiers began spilling into the Alamo. Once inside, the Mexicans quickly took control of the fighting, and the outnumbered Alamo defenders were defeated.



A Heroic Ending

Along with each of his fellow Texian soldiers, Davy Crockett died a hero in the Battle of the Alamo, but historians debate exactly how and when it happened. Some eyewitnesses claim he was killed while fighting inside the mission, while other accounts say he was among the survivors that General Santa Anna ordered to be executed after the battle. Regardless of the circumstances, Davy and the other brave men who defended the Alamo made history that day.

The brutal events of the Alamo pushed the Texans to fight even harder for their freedom. "Remember the Alamo" became their rallying cry, and only six weeks later, the Texans were able to secure their independence at the **Battle of San Jacinto**. The capture of General Santa Anna brought the war to an end, and true to their agreement with Davy, the **REPUBLIC of Texas** was born.

Texas remained an independent nation for nearly a decade before joining the United States, and the Alamo became a symbol of bravery in the fight against tyranny and oppression. This formative time of Texas history continues to bring pride to its people, and the state of Texas remains a strong beacon of independence within the United States to this day.

As for Davy Crockett, his story lives on, not just for his courageous efforts at the Alamo but for his larger-than-life frontier days. Throughout his life, Davy followed his restless spirit and sought to help the common man. He didn't get rich or become president, but he always fought for what he believed was right. Even when it wasn't popular and even when it cost him his life in battle. His resilient, unwavering spirit reminds us that the battle for freedom is always worth fighting.

INTERESTING FACTS

Davy claimed he killed 105 bears in about 7 months, from 1825-1826. This helped solidify his reputation as ***"King of the Wild Frontier."***

In 1833, a man published a book titled *Sketches and Eccentricities of Colonel David Crockett of West Tennessee*. The book was said to be authored by Crockett himself, but it turned out to be outrageous stories and tall tales. In response, Crockett published his own autobiography in 1834 to set the record straight on his life stories. *Sketches and Eccentricities* was one of several false accounts of Crockett's life and contributed to the tales of *Davy* rather than David Crockett.

Davy was the model for a character in the popular *Lion of the West* play that opened in New York in 1831. This helped to grow his fame.



Writing Task

Davy Crockett was a poor, uneducated man who rose to become a brave frontiersman and politician. He eventually learned to read and write, even writing his own autobiography to set the record straight when all sorts of crazy tall tales were circulating about him.

Pretend you are writing your own life story.

Share one story below that you would include in your autobiography.

Glossary

Alamo: A Spanish mission near San Antonio, Texas, that was later turned into a military fort. It is also the site of the Battle of the Alamo, where a small group of Texan and American rebels lost their lives to the Mexican Army during the Texan Revolution. Today, the Alamo is a historic site and museum.

Battle of San Jacinto: The final battle of the Texan Revolution, which took place on April 21, 1836. General Sam Houston led his army of around 900 men against General Santa Anna's troops of about 1,300 men. The battle only lasted 18 minutes, with Texas securing the victory.

Battle of Talladega: A battle that took place during the Creek War on November 9, 1813. General Andrew Jackson received word that their Creek allies in Talladega were being surrounded by the Red Sticks and needed aid. Jackson, along with the Tennessee Militia, arrived in time to fight the Red Stick warriors off.

Battle of Tallushatchee: A battle that took place during the Creek War and the War of 1812 on November 3, 1813. Colonel Coffee, on the orders of Andrew Jackson, took his militia to attack the town of Tallushatchee, where there was a strong number of Red Sticks. The Americans completely destroyed the town, and it was significant for being the first military victory for the Americans in the Creek War.

Centralist Republic of Mexico: The government that existed in Mexico in the 1830s and 40s. It was plagued by tyrannical rule, infighting, and the defeat during the Mexican-American War.

Comanche Tribe: A tribe that lived in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma during the 18th and 19th centuries. They were known for being fierce warriors and hunters and for having a nomadic lifestyle.

Constitution of 1824: Mexico's first constitution, enacted on October 4, 1824, after they gained their independence from Spain. It modeled Spain's and American constitutions, establishing the new nation as a republic that set up many democratic goals.

Creek Tribe: Also known as the Muscogee Nation for the language that they spoke. This tribe populated the American South, mainly Georgia and Alabama, during the 18th century. Their lifestyle consisted mainly of hunting and farming. Eventually, they left or were forcibly moved to present-day Oklahoma with the passing of the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

Creek War: A regional conflict in the U.S. South from 1813-1814. The Creek tribe split over the issue of white settlers encroaching on their land and culture, leading them into civil war. This led to American involvement when a militant faction called the Red Sticks attacked a settler fort. A series of battles over the course of a year led to U.S. victory, and the Creeks had to give up 22 million acres of their land in Georgia and Alabama.

Five Civilized Tribes: The Cherokee, Seminole, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw tribes. These tribes were originally located in the southeastern U.S. states and, in hopes of remaining, took on many practices and cultural traditions of white settlers. However, all five tribes were forced to move west and settle in the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma).

Glossary

Fort Mims: A fortified homestead in Alabama that was built around a plantation belonging to a man named Samuel Mims. Settlers, mixed Creeks, and black slaves took refuge in the fort before the attack on Fort Mims.

Indian Removal Act of 1830: The act signed into law by President Andrew Jackson that allowed him to negotiate treaties to move the Indians in the southeastern U.S. to lands west of the Mississippi River. These treaties offered the Indians payment for transportation and getting started in the new territory. Those who wouldn't negotiate or move voluntarily were later forced to relocate by the U.S. military.

Militia: A group of regular citizens who train for military service, usually to defend their homes or country.

Red Sticks: A militant group of the Creek tribe that resisted white settlement and assimilation into colonial culture. They got their name from the red sticks or war clubs they used in battle.

Republic: A system of government in which power ultimately comes from the people. In this system, the people usually exercise that power by electing representatives to vote for laws and a president to enforce those laws. The power of the government in a republic is limited and exists to protect the rights of the people.

Republic of Texas: An independent nation with a republican government. Texas gained independence in 1836 and ruled itself for nearly a decade before joining the United States in 1845.

Scalping: The violent act of removing the skin and hair from the top of a victim's head. The practice was usually carried out with a knife.

Siege: A military attack method in which an armed force tries to take over a fortified city or town. The main tactic of a siege is cutting off the supplies to the city or town in the hopes of forcing those inside to surrender.

Sovereignty: The power or authority of a state to govern itself.

Spokesperson: A person who speaks for another individual, group, or organization.

Texas Revolution: The conflict between Texas and Mexico during the 1830s, in which Texas rebelled against the centralization of Mexican authority over its territory. Texas won its independence after six months of fighting, forming the Republic of Texas until it later joined the United States.

Texian Army: The land warfare branch of the rebels during the Texas Revolution. Texian was the name given to white American settlers in Mexican Texas.

Trail of Tears: The forced relocation, from 1830-1850, of the "Five Civilized Tribes" from their native lands in the Southeast to Indian Territory west of the Mississippi. Thousands died on the way due to lack of supplies, disease, and harsh weather conditions.

Sources

"Battle and Revolution." *The Alamo*, www.thealamo.org/remember/battle-and-revolution. Accessed 31 July 2024.

Bowers, Dwight Blocker. "The Saga of Davy Crockett's Coonskin Cap." *National Museum of American History*, 16 Nov. 2014, americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/saga-davy-crocketts-coonskin-cap. Accessed 31 July 2024.

Braund, Kathryn. "Creek War of 1813-14." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, 28 Oct. 2008, encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/creek-war-of-1813-14/. Accessed 31 July 2024.

Crockett, David. "Narrative of the Life of David Crockett, of the State of Tennessee." *Project Gutenberg*, 5 Nov. 2011. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/37925/37925-h/37925-h.htm. Accessed 31 July 2024.

"Davy Crockett." *New World Encyclopedia*, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Davy_Crockett. Accessed 31 July 2024.

Gaskill, Melissa. "A Souvenir at the Alamo: Crockett's Coonskin Cap." *Texas Highways*, July 2014, texashighways.com/travel-news/-davy-crockett-s-coonskin-cap/#:~:text=Furthermore%2C%20while%20Crockett%20didn't,winter%20caps%20in%20those%20days. Accessed 31 July 2024.

Hanson, Matt. "Mythology, Men, and Coonskin Caps: On Michael Wallis's David Crockett." *The Millions*, 18 Nov. 2011, themillions.com/2011/11/mythology-men-and-coonskin-caps-on-michael-walliss-david-crockett.html. Accessed 31 July 2024.

History.com Editors. "Battle of the Alamo." *History.com*, 12 Jan. 2021, www.history.com/topics/latin-america/alamo. Accessed 31 July 2024.

History.com Editors. "How Slavery Led to Texas's Independence." *History.com*, 2 Nov. 2023, www.history.com/topics/us-states/how-slavery-led-to-texass-independence-video. Accessed 31 July 2024.

Hutton, Paul Andrew. "Crockett and the Creek War: 'We Now Shot Them like Dogs.'" *HistoryNet*, 26 Sept. 2019, www.historynet.com/crockett-and-the-creek-war-we-now-shot-them-like-dogs/. Accessed 31 July 2024.

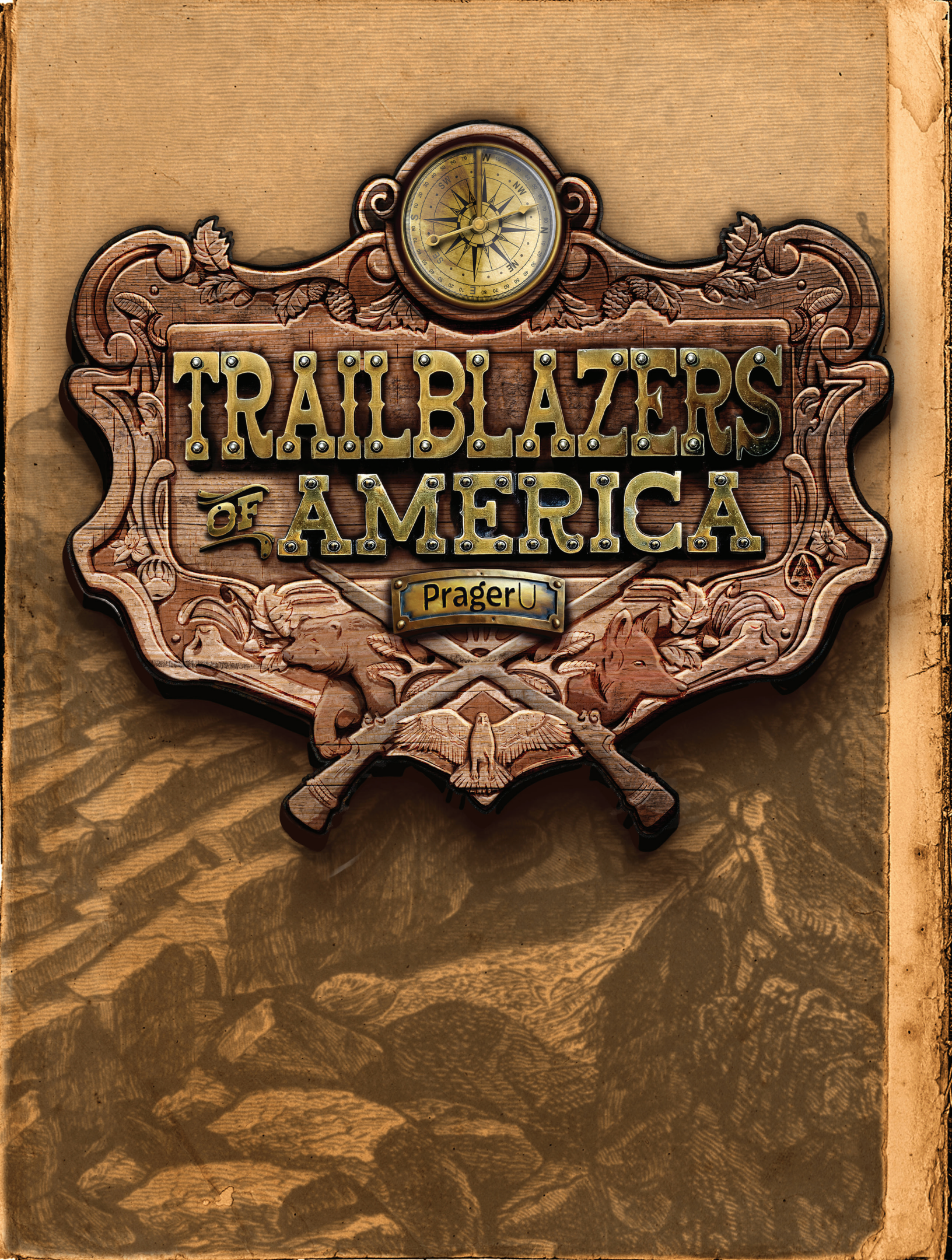
Lackey, Cassidy. "David 'Davy' Crockett—the Alamo Hero—Texas Proud." *Texas Proud*, 4 Dec. 2020, texasproud.com/david-davy-crockett/. Accessed 31 July 2024.

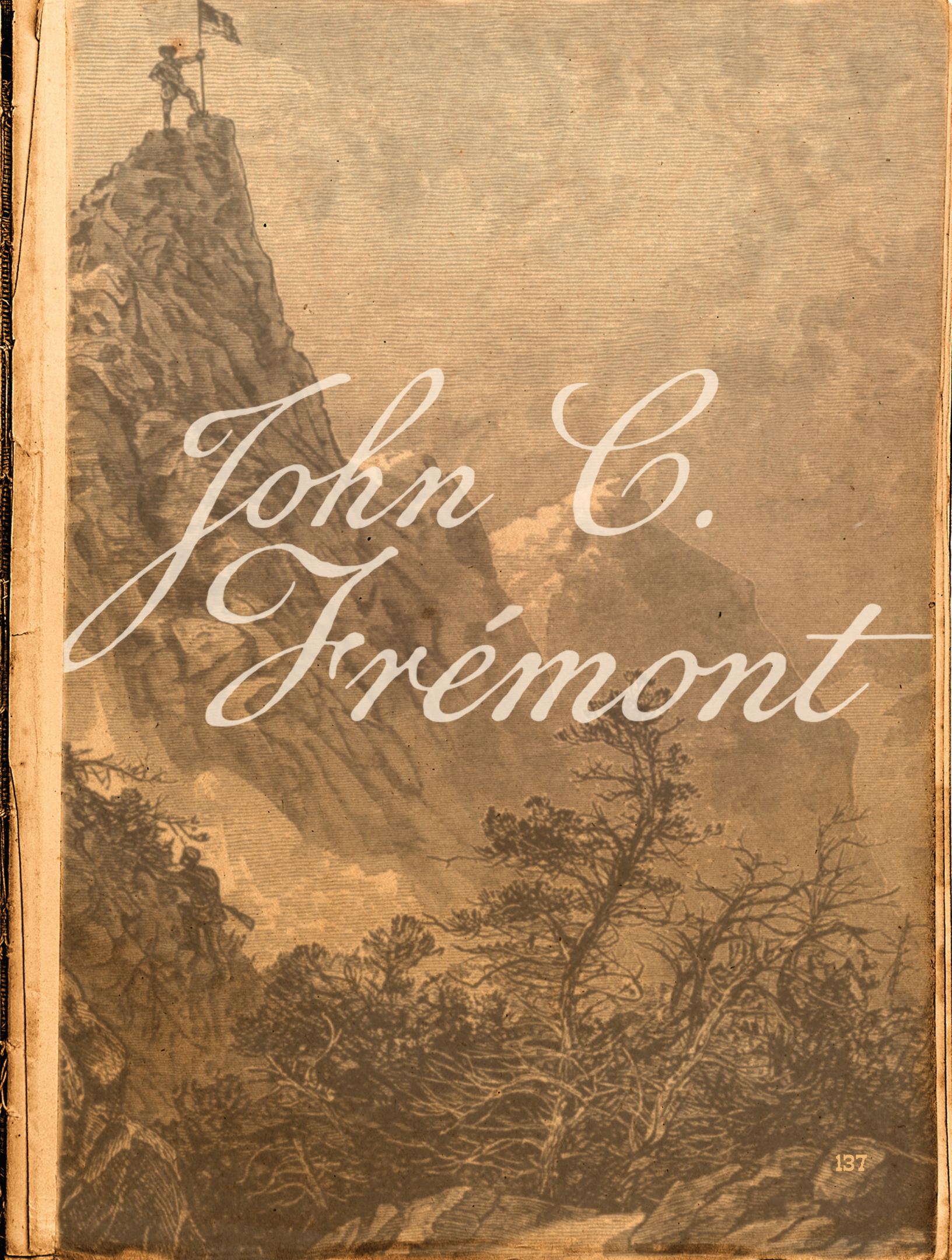
Lofaro, Michael A. "Crockett, David." *Texas State Historical Association*, 4 Sept. 2023, www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/crockett-david. Accessed 31 July 2024.

Trimble, Marshall. "David Crockett's Rifles." *True West Magazine*, 19 Oct. 2022, truewestmagazine.com/david-crocketts-rifles/#:~:text=him%20with%20a%20.-,40%2Dcaliber%20flintlock%20crafted%20by%20James%20Graham%20around%201822.,Museum%20collection%20in%20San%20Antonio. Accessed 31 July 2024.

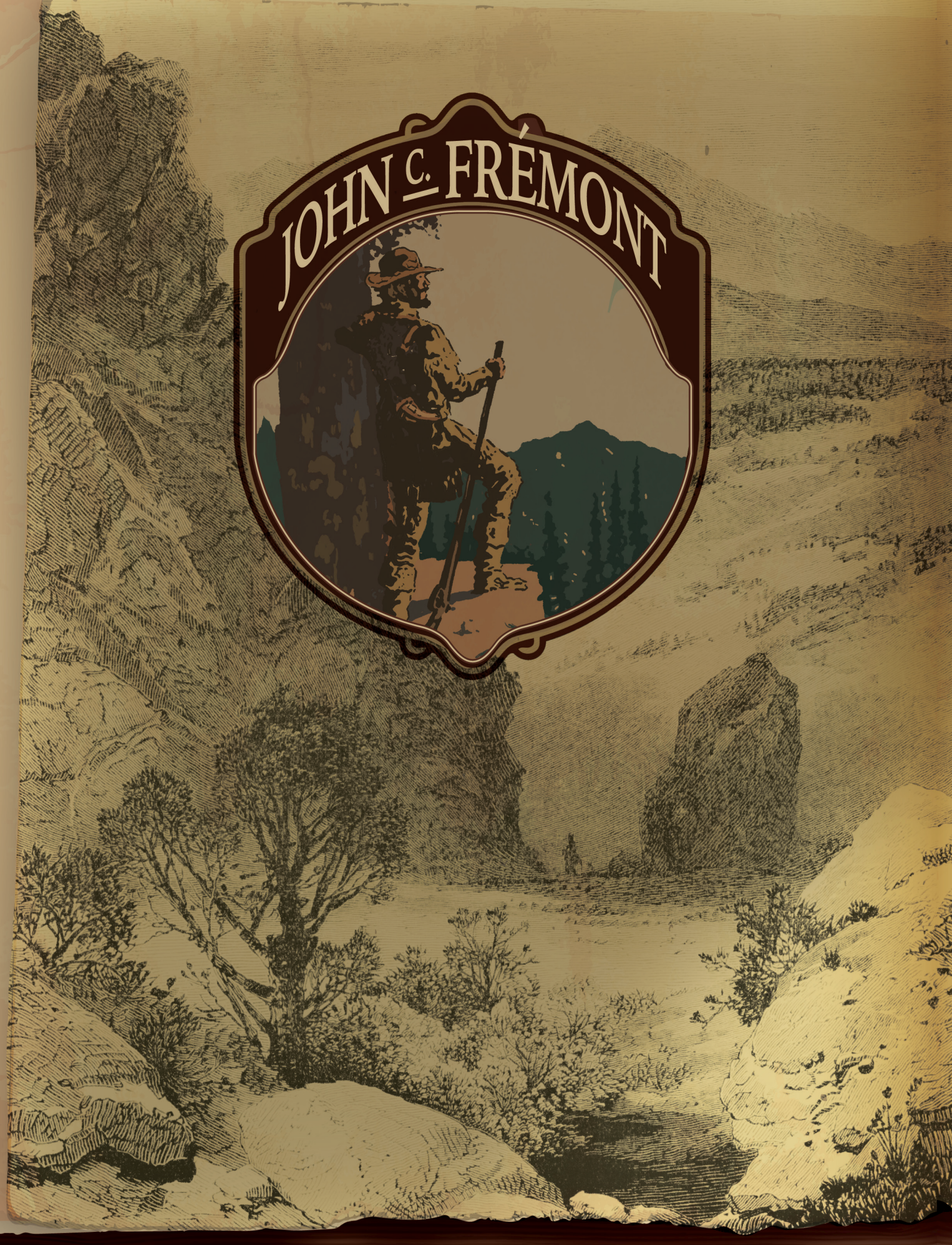
Waselkov, Gregory A. "Fort Mims Battle and Massacre." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, 15 Mar. 2007, encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/-fort-mims-battle-and-massacre/. Accessed 31 July 2024.

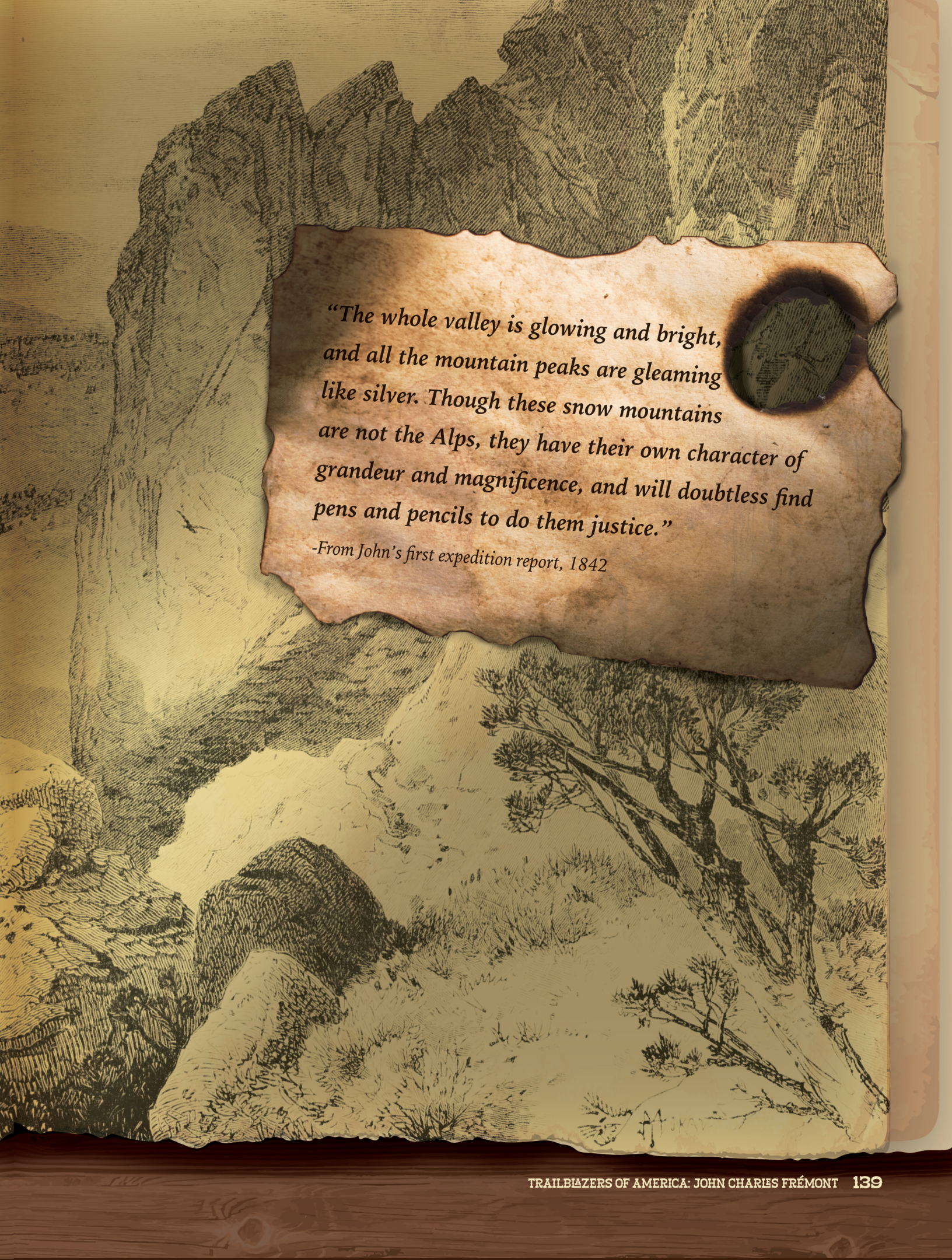
Watts, Jennifer. "Who Was David Crockett?" *Tennessee State Museum*, 15 Dec. 2020, tnmuseum.org/junior-curators/posts/who-was-david-crockett?locale=en_us. Accessed 31 July 2024.


TRAILBLAZERS
OF AMERICA
PragerU



John C. Frémont


JOHN C. FRÉMONT



"The whole valley is glowing and bright, and all the mountain peaks are gleaming like silver. Though these snow mountains are not the Alps, they have their own character of grandeur and magnificence, and will doubtless find pens and pencils to do them justice."

-From John's first expedition report, 1842

The Young Genius

College of Charleston, South Carolina, 1831

John leaned against the window in his teacher's office. He watched the leaves of the tree outside shudder and fall to the ground, only to be trampled by students hurrying to class.

"Mr. Frémont," Dr. Roberton said sharply. "Did you hear me?"

The stern reprimand brought John's senses back to the room. He knew he was in trouble, but he'd talk his way out of it.



"My attendance has been poor, I know," John replied. "But I can catch up in no time. You know I never met a subject I couldn't master."

Dr. Roberton sighed. "You're smart and a quick learner. You've impressed me in your time here, but what good is knowledge if you don't apply yourself?"

"How am I supposed to apply myself inside these walls?" John asked. "The world is waiting. Like all those books I read in your classes, adventure, conquest, and love are waiting out there to be experienced."

Dr. Roberton smiled, remembering their many conversations about these very themes in the Greek and Roman literature he'd assigned John to read. But then his face grew serious. "I'm afraid it's out of my hands. The college has decided to expel you."

John wasn't surprised, nor could he blame them. He mostly regretted letting down Dr. Roberton.

His teacher rose from his desk, accompanied by a sad creak from his wooden chair. "My boy, I hope you find what you are looking for beyond these walls. Lord knows I did everything I could for you."

John shook his hand. "Thank you, Dr. Roberton."

The teacher's smile returned. "I believe you can do great things for your country, John."

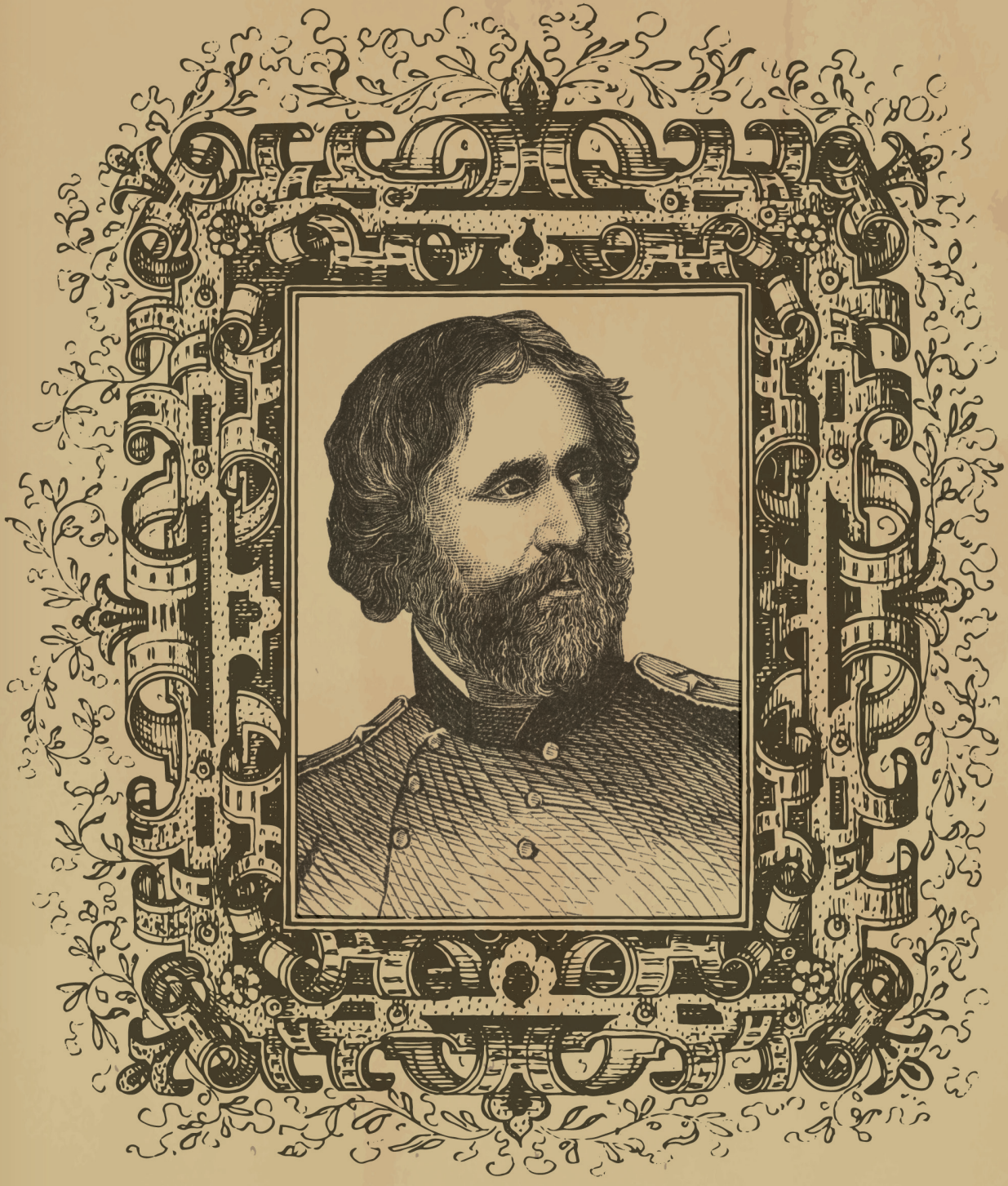
But as John left the school grounds, he wasn't thinking about his country. At least, not yet. The only thought running through the teen's mind was, *I'm free!*

Meet John C. Frémont

John Charles Frémont was many things to his country... an explorer, a math teacher, a military leader, and a politician. It was an impressive career for an expelled academic who didn't come from wealth or privilege. John was born in Georgia in 1813, but his father died when he was only five. His mother, Anne, moved their family to Charleston, South Carolina, where she did her best to find a decent education for little John.

Eventually, John caught the attention of a prominent lawyer who decided to teach him. But, when John needed more time and attention, he was brought to Dr. Roberton at the College of Charleston. The boy was only 16 years old, but his teacher saw the light of genius in him and immediately threw him into his most challenging classes. Over time, John showed an aptitude for literature and math. Shortly before his graduation though, he was expelled for his poor attendance.

John wasn't down on his luck for long. A diplomat and former congressman from South Carolina named Joel Poinsett helped him get a job as a math teacher on a U.S. warship. When he returned from his travels, he was granted multiple degrees from the College of Charleston in 1836. Just two years later, he was **commissioned** by Poinsett once again—this time to the **Topographical Engineers**, as a second lieutenant for the U.S. Army. The group was assigned to survey and map land for the government to find railroad routes to the West.



During this time, John met one of the biggest supporters of American westward expansion, Senator Thomas Benton from Missouri. In 1841, John married the senator's daughter, Jessie. The two would become a power couple—he the explorer and she the promoter—that sold people on the idea of the West. In a time when many believed the frontier to be a harsh, unlivable desert, the Frémonts showed Americans the beauty and plenty of the lands beyond the young nation's existing borders.

1st Expedition: Frémont's Peak

Wind River Mountains (present-day Wyoming), 1842

John saw the summit of the mountain above him, and his heart swelled with excitement. *Finally, almost there.*

His team had come so far, cresting peak after peak, hoping each one to be the last, and John knew with certainty that this was it. Putting his bare hands into the crevices for grip, he climbed the steep rock and sprang over the edge.

"Woahhh!!" He caught his balance just in time. The summit was only a few feet wide, and he'd nearly launched himself over the other side.

He took a moment to soak in the view. The sky was clear and sunny, and he could see countless rivers and lakes spread out in the misty valley below. It was cold, but what took his breath away more than the temperature was the silence. It felt like another world or as if they had stumbled upon the dawn of a new creation where nothing yet lived.

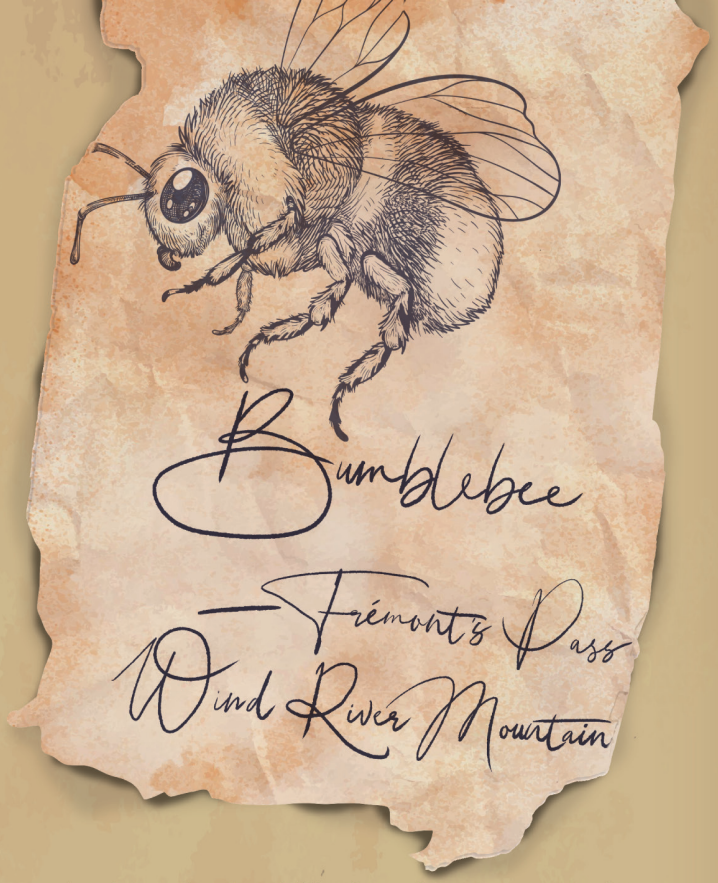
"Everything okay up there?" came the call from below.

John returned down to his men and let them take their turns, one at a time, on the summit. The wonder of it all made him feel like he was in a dream, but the scientist in him awoke, and he pulled out his **barometer** to measure the atmospheric readings.

"Forty-four degrees Fahrenheit," he said, jotting the number in his journal. "Altitude is 13,570 feet."

"Look!" The men pointed at a solitary bumblebee that landed on someone's knee.


Forty-four degrees
Fahrenheit
Altitude is 13,570 feet



John marveled at the little creature—the only sign of animal life they'd seen yet on these peaks. It was a strange place for a lover of sunshine and flowers, but John imagined the humble bee was like them... a pioneer: the first of his kind to cross the mountain barrier and perhaps the first to fly so high.

He hesitated, then plucked the bee from his crewman's knee. They needed to study the plant and animal life of the region. John placed the creature in the pages of his journal alongside their plant samples. It was a necessary sacrifice for the science of their mission.

John looked at the sky again. They needed to head back to camp before dark, but he still had one last thing to do. He climbed back up to the narrow summit and planted an American flag in the crunchy snow. It whipped in the wind, and John's chest swelled with pride.

"For the United States of America!" he shouted.

The men below echoed his chant.

As he stood on the peak, John knew their accomplishment was more than a job completed—it was a defining moment for their country. Everyone on his team felt it—that strong, almost divine pull—that they weren't just assigned to go... but they were *meant* to go.

And wherever that pull led them next, they would be ready.

Manifest Destiny

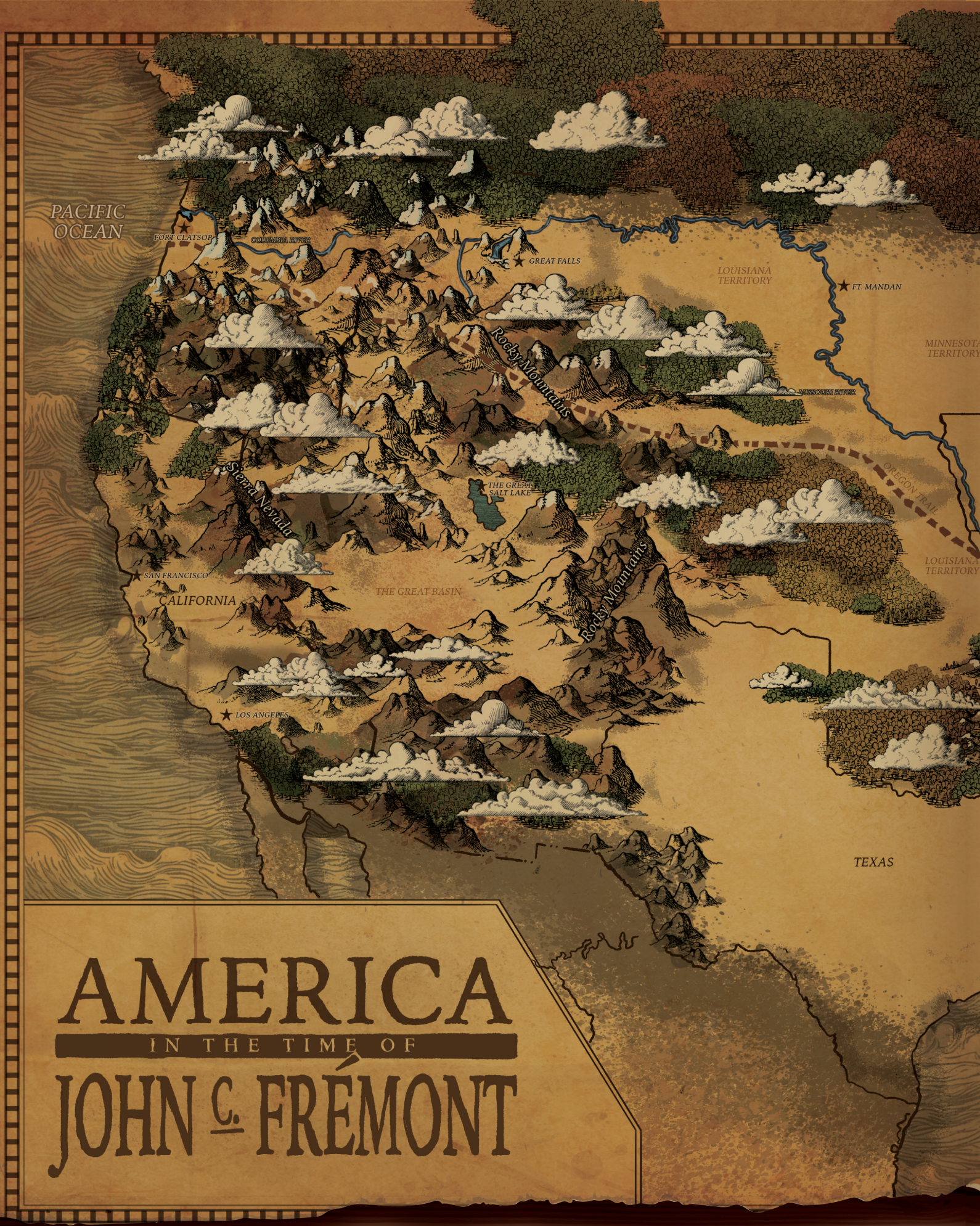
The desire to move west was both a push and a pull for early Americans. With growing families and waves of new immigrants, overpopulation pushed many settlers to find open lands. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 doubled the size of the U.S.'s territory, giving people the chance to stake their claims on new terrain. The land, as many explorers discovered, was beautiful and rich with fertile ground, plant and animal life, and even gold. The pull of the West promised success and wealth for those tough enough to survive the difficult journey. Expansion became inevitable for the eager Americans, almost as if it was their duty or calling to spread across the entire continent. This was their **Manifest Destiny**, a popular phrase that came about much by accident during John Frémont's lifetime.

Manifest Destiny as a term began gaining popularity in 1845, thanks to an article written by newspaper editor John O'Sullivan. His piece was about why the U.S. needed to **annex** Texas. More than that, it was a protest against England and France's interference in American affairs. O'Sullivan believed the Europeans were infringing on Americans' divine right to possess lands across the entire continent.

At first, nobody thought much of the phrase, but soon, it became the rallying cry for the rapid movement west. Those who opposed the idea claimed it was hostile and arrogant. But the obscure newspaper editor had tapped into a long-held American feeling. Ever since their founding, Americans have had their sights set on the West. Moving westward meant more opportunity and a better life. The settlers believed that **Providence**—God's goodwill and blessing—would guide them in their goal to establish democracy and freedom from coast to coast.

Manifest Destiny played a major role in securing Oregon, California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, and Texas for the United States. It was an idea so powerful, so rooted in the American spirit, nothing could stand in its way.

John Frémont's expeditions were carried out on the wings of that destiny, whether he knew what the movement was being called or not.


PACIFIC OCEAN
FORT CLATSOP
COLUMBIA RIVER
GREAT FALLS
LOUISIANA TERRITORY
FT. MANDAN
MINNESOTA TERRITORY
Rocky Mountains
MISSOURI RIVER
OREGON TRAIL
Sierra Nevada
THE GREAT SALT LAKE
SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA
THE GREAT BASIN
Rocky Mountains
LOUISIANA TERRITORY
LOS ANGELES
TEXAS
AMERICA
IN THE TIME OF
JOHN C. FRÉMONT


MAINE
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
NEW YORK
NEW YORK CITY
NEW JERSEY
PHILADELPHIA
PENNSYLVANIA
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
D.C.
VIRGINIA
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON
ATLANTIC OCEAN
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
DETROIT
CHICAGO
IOWA
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
OHIO
MISSOURI
OHIO RIVER
ST. LOUIS
KENTUCKY
CUMBERLAND GAP
TENNESSEE
ARKANSAS
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
LOUISIANA
NEW ORLEANS
FLORIDA
Appalachian Mountains
Appalachian Mountains



The Pathfinder

John's first and second expeditions earned him the nickname "The Pathfinder." On these early journeys, John mapped the **Oregon Trail**, the primary east-west wagon route that pioneers used for travel. He successfully made it through the **Rocky Mountains** using the **South Pass**, which was an easier wagon route that passed through the mountain range. He made it to the **Wind River Mountains** in Wyoming, claiming them for the United States. On the second trip, he dared to go even further, exploring the **Great Basin**, the **Great Salt Lake**, and the **Sierra Nevada**.

John's academic studies came in handy as he drew maps, took plant samples, measured atmospheric readings, and even recorded constellations in the sky. Every detail mattered and helped him understand the land better. When he returned home after his trips, his wife, Jessie, would bring his journeys to life. She was a talented writer and helped craft the reports John submitted to the government. The reports were so entertaining that the U.S. Senate allowed them to be published. Newspapers circulated the reports to the public, and it didn't take long for perceptions of the Wild West to change. The West had long been thought of as a barren desert—harsh and unlivable. But John's reports, coupled with Jessie's creative flair, created an almost romantic view of the frontier. Their words were an invitation, even an early advertisement that would lead a new wave of settlers westward.



A FIELD GUIDE TO

THE ROCKIES ANIMALS



ELK ANTLERS



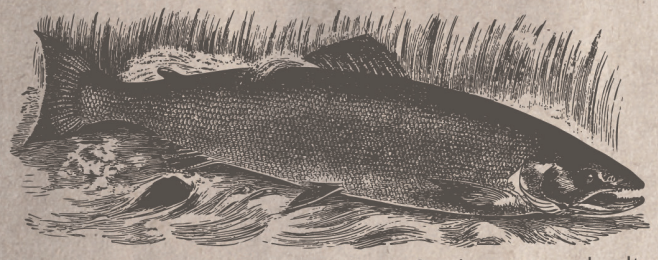
MOUNTAIN GOAT PERCHED ON PEAK

ELK

The second largest member of the deer family. Males are called bulls and have large antlers, while the females are called cows and do not have antlers. A bull can weigh anywhere from 700 to 1,100 pounds and can run at speeds up to 40 miles per hour! This species likes to roam in herds and can be found in forest and mountain regions of North America and Central Asia.

MOUNTAIN GOAT

Also known as the Rocky Mountain Goat. These mammals have cloven hooves, which make them really great climbers. They are mostly found in remote and rugged mountain regions of western North America. Their thick, wool coats, which range from white to gray, keep them warm at higher altitudes. Both the males and females have beards, a short tail, and long black horns. In the wild, they can typically live for 12-15 years.



SALMON

A fish species that can live in both freshwater and saltwater. Though there are many species of salmon, most have a sleek and streamlined body. Their bodies can change color throughout their lives. They are typically born in freshwater streams, migrate to the ocean, and then return to freshwater near the end of their lives. Salmon are known to be very healthy for the human diet, being high in protein and vitamins. Frémont and his crew ate salmon while on their expeditions out West.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

THE ROCKIES PLANTS





PINE TREES

The *Pinus* or pine family of plants includes any coniferous shrub or tree, meaning they produce cones. There are over 100 species of pines, and they are common in the Northern Hemisphere where climates are cooler. They can grow anywhere from 10 to 260 feet tall and live to be very old—from 100 to 1,000 years, sometimes longer! Frémont saw many pines on his expeditions through the mountains and the Northwest.

SAGEBRUSH

A shrub that has a fragrant smell and grows in dry climates such as desert or mountain regions. The bush has many branches with silvery-gray leaves and yellow flowers when in bloom. It provides food to many animals including deer, rabbits, and grouse. In one of his written reports, Frémont described how the bush's dark gray appearance gave the landscape "a gloomy and somber appearance."





FRÉMONT'S COTTONWOOD

A tree named after the explorer himself—*Populus fremontii*. It grows near rivers, streams, or other wetlands in the southwestern United States. The tree can grow from 39 to 115 feet in height. Its leaves are heart-shaped, and in the spring, flower clusters grow that are dispersed by the wind, making it look like cotton hanging from the tree.

A Secret Mission?

After the success of his first two expeditions, John was eager to return to the trails. In 1845, amidst rumors of a coming war with Mexico, the government sent John on another scouting mission. This time, John wasn't the only one pushing boundaries.

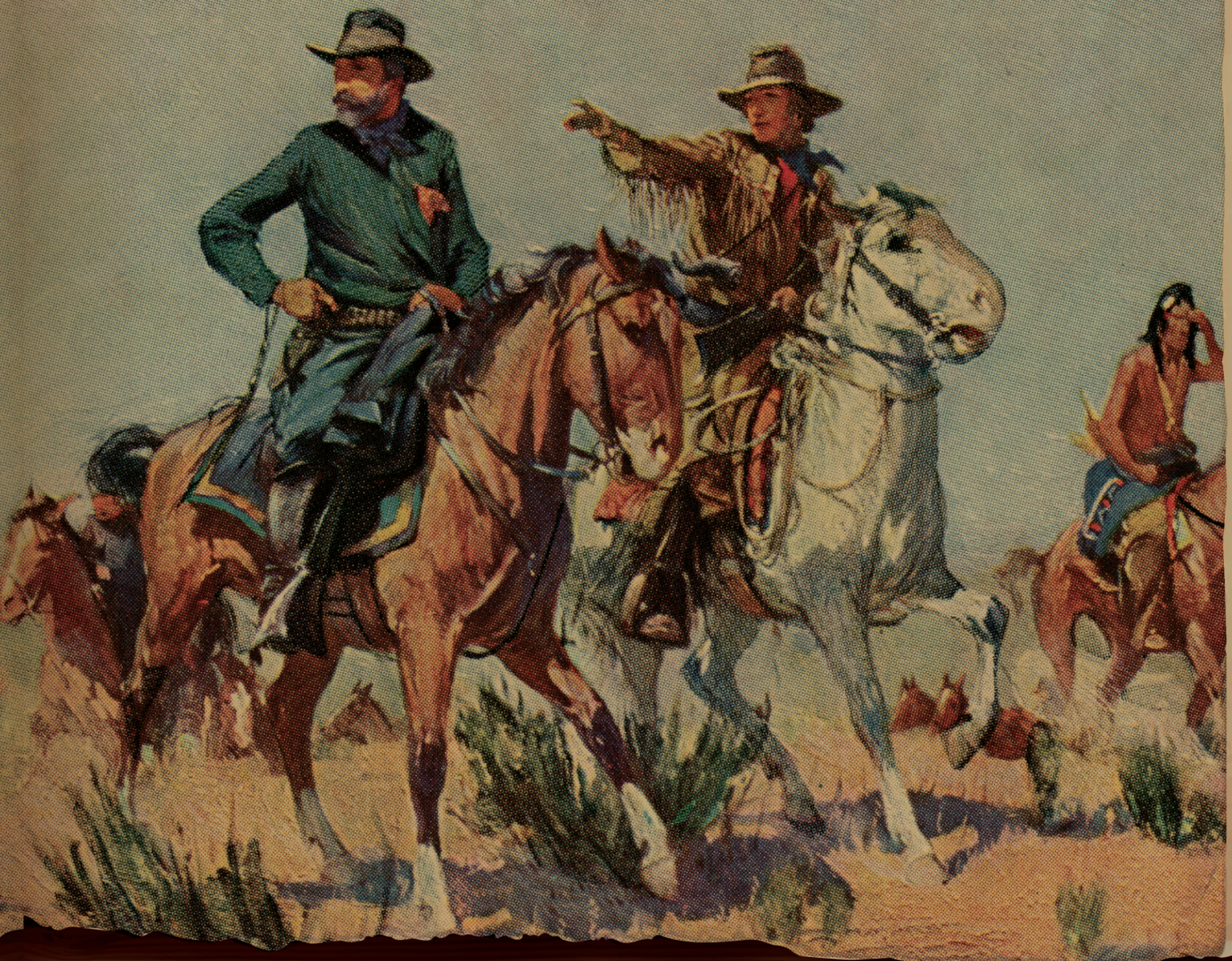
The United States had its eyes set on the northern Mexican territories, including Texas and California. The territories were sparsely populated, and white settlers in those areas wanted freedom from Mexican authority. Rebellion boiled over in Texas, and the Texans declared independence in early 1836. Battles were fought, and Mexican authorities were expelled from Texas, but Mexico still considered the land as theirs and was angry for years. When Texas was admitted to the United States in 1845, it added fuel to the fire. Then, in May of 1846, the U.S. and Mexico got into a dispute over the southern border of Texas, and fighting quickly broke out. The **Mexican-American War** had begun.

John was on his way to California before the war started. His official assignment was scouting a potential railroad route through the Great Basin and into California. However, historians debate whether he was on a secret mission for the president. His top-secret instructions? To encourage the local Californians to rebel and start a war with Mexico. John and his band of skilled men entered California, and when Mexican authorities questioned their intent, they avoided suspicions by claiming they were on a scientific mission through the state. They were ordered to stay in the San Joaquin River Valley, away from the Mexicans. However, John violated this agreement when his crew traveled southwest and set up camp near Monterey. The Americans raised their flag, and Mexican authorities demanded they leave the state.

With the Mexicans gathering troops to move against them, John and his men decided to retreat into Oregon. They ran into more trouble there, clashing with Native American tribes who didn't want U.S. expansion. A few battles were recorded during this time, with most records noting the significant loss of Indian life. Conflicts like this weren't unusual on the frontier, and it went both ways. Indians and settlers alike were victims of brutal attacks during the push for westward expansion.

Meanwhile, American settlers in California were worried. Their land claims from Mexico were at risk. Those who didn't become Mexican citizens could have their land taken away at any time. Rumors spread that Mexico was going to act and that Native Americans were encouraged to burn the settlers' crops. Though their numbers were few, the Americans were ready to rise up.

Around the time the Mexican-American War officially kicked off in Texas, John and his men returned to California. They arrived just in time to support a small group of rebellious settlers in taking over the town of Sonoma. It fell quickly, and the action became known as the **Bear Flag Revolt**.



MANIFEST DESTINY

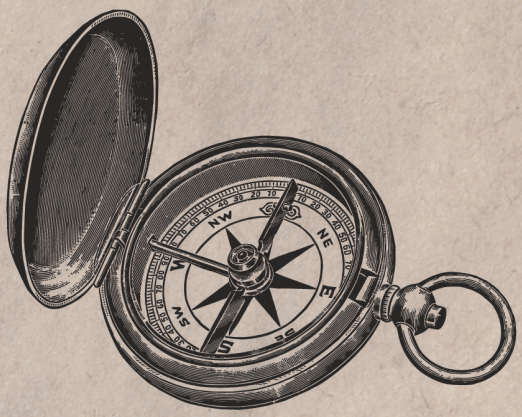
The American president most associated with Manifest Destiny is James K. Polk, who held the office from 1845 to 1849. Polk, and most Americans of his day, believed adding territory was important and noble because it would spread freedom and bring prosperity to more people. During Polk's presidency, U.S. territory grew by more than a million square miles.



A FIELD GUIDE TO

THE ROCKIES TECHNOLOGY



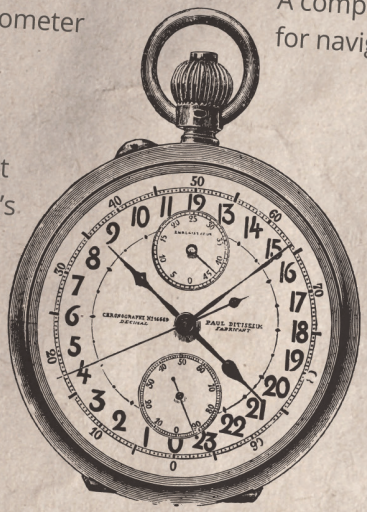


BAROMETER

A scientific instrument resembling a compass that measures changes in air pressure. Frémont used this tool to predict weather patterns and measure altitude or height on his expeditions. A rising barometer signaled good weather, while a dropping barometer meant bad weather was on the way. For altitude, the lower the pressure (meaning thinner air) the higher the altitude, while higher pressure meant lower altitude. At one point, Frémont's barometer broke, and he described in his expedition report the great lengths he went to fix it!

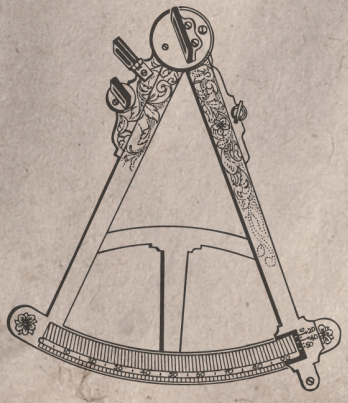
COMPASS

A circular device that is used to tell directions such as north, south, east, and west. It works by using a magnetic needle that always points toward magnetic north, or the North Pole. A compass was a key part of Frémont's tools for navigation on his journeys.



CHRONOMETER

A mechanical timepiece, or clock, that had great accuracy and helped people determine longitude while at sea. Frémont mentioned having a chronometer in his detailed report about his expeditions.



SEXTANT

A navigational instrument that is used to measure the angle between the horizon and a celestial body such as the sun, moon, or stars. It helps determine latitude and longitude. Frémont used this frequently on his expeditions.

A New Flag; A New Republic

Sonoma, California, June 1846



Celebration was in the air, and a party began. John watched as the rag-tag group of rebels raised a new flag over the town. It was nothing more than a white piece of linen with a drawing of a bear facing a lone star.

The men clanked their drinks, making toasts to the new "Republic of California."

John remembered his climb to the peaks of the Wind River Mountains. It felt familiar… planting a flag… sweet victory…

Only this felt almost too easy. His hike up the mountains had pushed him to his physical limits and made him work for the end result.

This rebellion, on the other hand, had happened quickly and smoothly.

The settlers jostled him, and he finally cracked a smile. *Enjoy yourself. This is a victory for the United States. We finally have a foothold on the West Coast.*

"To John!" the men shouted. "We couldn't have done it without you!"

There were already whispers circling that he would be made governor. John felt his doubts slowly melting away. *Leader of the Republic of California. That has a nice ring to it,* he thought.

But John was right to be skeptical. The war wasn't won, not yet.

The End of the Mexican-American War

The Bear Flag Revolt was short-lived, but it paved the way for America's conquest of California and its eventual statehood. The rebels held control of the republic for 25 days before an American military leader, U.S. Navy Lieutenant Joseph Revere, took over San Francisco and then Sonoma. He claimed California for the United States, ending the brief existence of the independent nation. The Bear Flag was replaced with the American flag.

With northern California effectively under American command, the military leaders set their sights on the southern point of power: Los Angeles. Commodore Robert Stockton put Frémont in command, and his battalion moved south, taking city after city. In January 1847, Frémont's troops reached Los Angeles, where he received the surrender of the remaining Mexican forces. John then drafted an agreement called the **Treaty of Cahuenga**, and California was officially under American control.

Commodore Stockton made Frémont the military governor of California, but like the Bear Flag Republic, that title would be short-lived. The Mexican-American War was fought on multiple fronts, and General Stephen Kearny marched into California with his own set of orders from President James K. Polk. The seasoned officer had been instrumental in taking New Mexico. When he arrived and found Frémont in charge, things became tense. Kearny was told to set up a new government, but when John refused to give up his position, Kearny put him in his place. The general arrested him and marched him all the way back to Washington, D.C., to be **court-martialed**.

While the fate of California was secured, John's fate still hung in the balance.

On Trial

Courthouse, Washington, D.C., January 1848

Jessie's hands trembled as she held the latest newspaper. Bold letters screamed out, "Pathfinder's Penalty: Frémont Accused of Insubordination."

Those editors think they are so clever with words, she fumed. Her husband was a hero, not a traitor. Were they so quick to forget all he'd discovered and accomplished? How he'd made them all fall in love with the West and dream of a brighter future?

She crumpled the newspaper. *I'll write you all something worth reading.*

The doors to the courtroom suddenly flung open, and people came pouring out, chattering in a frenzy. She pushed through the crowd to find her husband.

Then, she saw him. Rushing to his side, she tried to regain her composure. "Well?" she asked.

He let out a frustrated sigh. "I was guilty, but we received word that President Polk dropped the charges. He wants me to take up my sword once more for the Army."

Jessie could hear the bitterness in his voice. He was hurt, and she didn't blame him. "What did you say?"

His reply was cold and emphatic. "I told them they could have my resignation."



Aftermath

Despite the trial and John's resignation, his public popularity and admiration remained strong. John went on another two expeditions, this time financed by himself and his father-in-law. The goal again was to find possible railroad routes to link the East and the West. His 4th expedition ended in failure as a harsh winter in the Rocky Mountains took many of his men and supplies. The 5th expedition, though challenging, provided more valuable information about the region.

The Frémonts settled for a time in California and enjoyed the wealth of the **Gold Rush**, which brought some 300,000 settlers to the territory beginning in 1848. John and Jessie's home estate in California sat on a rich gold vein, and when it was first discovered, John became a multimillionaire.

Things seemed to be turning around for the Frémonts, and John made a shift into the political world. When California was officially admitted as a state in 1850, John was elected as one of its first senators, serving until 1851. Though California joined the Union as a free state, slavery was still an issue affecting the whole country. John was anti-slavery and didn't want it spreading into new territories, and his firm beliefs ultimately cost him his re-election. However, Frémont wouldn't remain in the shadows for long. In 1856, he would make his mark on American history in a new way. That year, he became the first presidential candidate nominated for the newly formed **Republican Party**.



"Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Speech, Free Men, and Frémont"

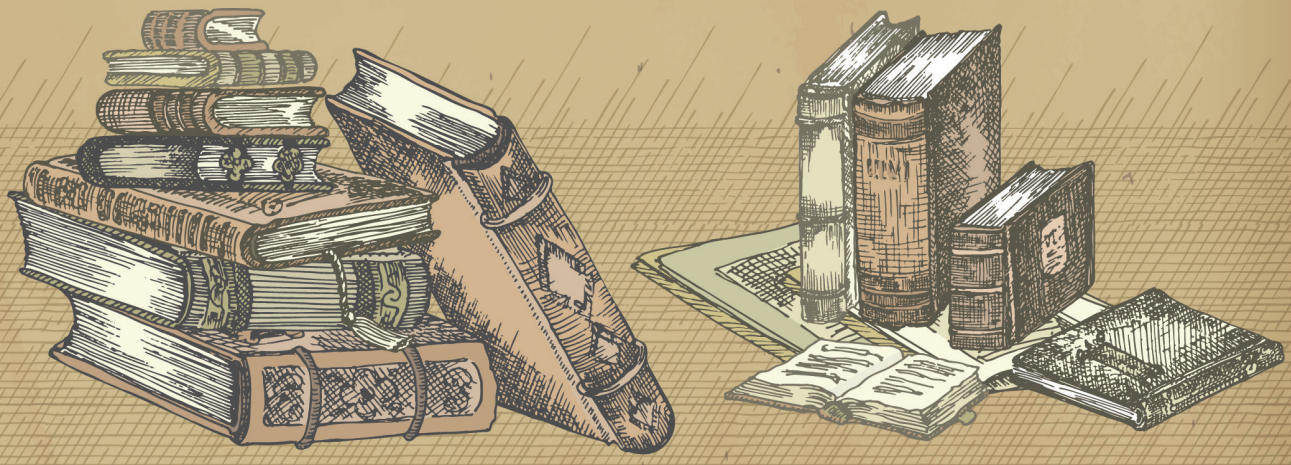
Frémont home in New York, 1856

Jessie felt John's hand on her shoulder, drawing her attention away from her reading. "What is it, dear?" she asked.

"I thought you could use a break. I don't think I've seen you move from your desk in the past two hours," he said. "What are you working on now?"

She sighed. "It's all these biographies people are writing about you. I'm just trying to make sure what people are putting out there for your campaign is accurate. The Democrats want to ruin your reputation any way they can. You should see the wild accusations they're making. They say you're going to tear the Union apart with your radical ideas."

"Oh, I've endured worse," John replied with a smile. He pointed toward the window, to the group of people outside their house. "They seem to like me, at least."



The well-wishers had been coming on and off since the Republican convention announced John as their presidential candidate. They always wanted to hear him speak, but John was firm in remaining out of the public eye. He didn't want to be seen as too ambitious or eager for the presidency. That would be improper.

The chants of the well-wishers came muffled through the walls. "Let us see our Jessie!"

John chuckled, "Seems I was mistaken. They are here for you. It's odd, really. It almost seems like you are running for president, not me. You're doing all the work, after all." He pointed to the stacks of papers and pamphlets on her desk.

"On your behalf, my love," Jessie said, kissing his cheek. "That's what campaign managers are for."

A knock sounded at the door, and John gave her a questioning look. "Who's that?"

"Your team wanted to discuss some more strategies for getting support," she explained. "I promise it won't take long."

The truth was, Jessie couldn't afford to take a break. Not while the odds were stacked against them. She and John knew from the beginning it was a long shot—committing to a brand new party that held an unpopular view on slavery. But they had to keep going, to dig in and see it through to the end. The country was falling apart, and maybe no candidate could keep it together, but she and John had once changed people's minds about the West. If only they could convince America that they were trying to keep the Union together, too.



WHAT IS TOPOGRAPHY

John C. Frémont was part of a group of scientists called topographers, whose job was to study the physical features of the land around them and represent them on a map.

Topographic maps look a little funky! That's because they represent 3-dimensional objects on a flat, 2-dimensional piece of paper. They use contour lines to show the differences in elevation or height of various features, such as mountains.

Take a look at the following example of a mountain and its topographic representation:

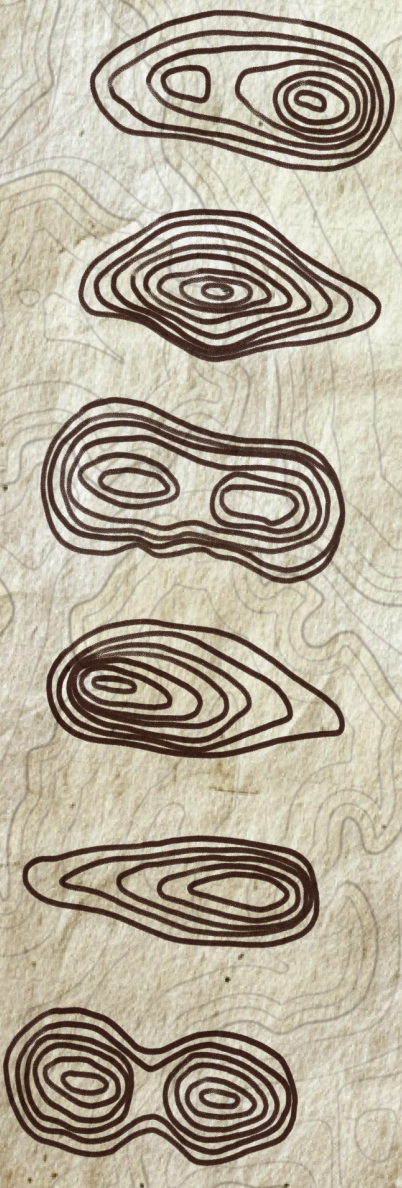


HELPFUL HINTS

- If the lines are close together, then the land is very steep.
- If the lines are far apart, the land is relatively flat.
- If you see circles within circles, it's a sign of a hill or mountain.
- The topographic drawing is like looking down on the land from a bird's eye view, so imagine what the land would look like from high above rather than the side view.

Now, give it a try yourself with this matching exercise!

Match the mountain with its topographic drawing.





Check your answers on page 175.

The Republican Party and the Election of 1856

American politics has long been dominated by a two-party system. During much of the 1830s and 40s, those parties were the Democrats and the **Whigs**, but that all changed in 1854 when the Whig Party became divided over the issue of slavery. The party split, with many pro-slavery members moving to the Democrats and the anti-slavery supporters branching off to create the Republican Party.

The slavery issue had reached a breaking point, especially with the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**. This law gave these two new territories **popular sovereignty**, meaning they could decide for themselves whether to be a slave or free state. The result was a violent string of attacks in Kansas as both pro and anti-slavery Americans tried to sway the vote. This tension accelerated the collapse of the Whig Party and paved the way for a new party to rise.

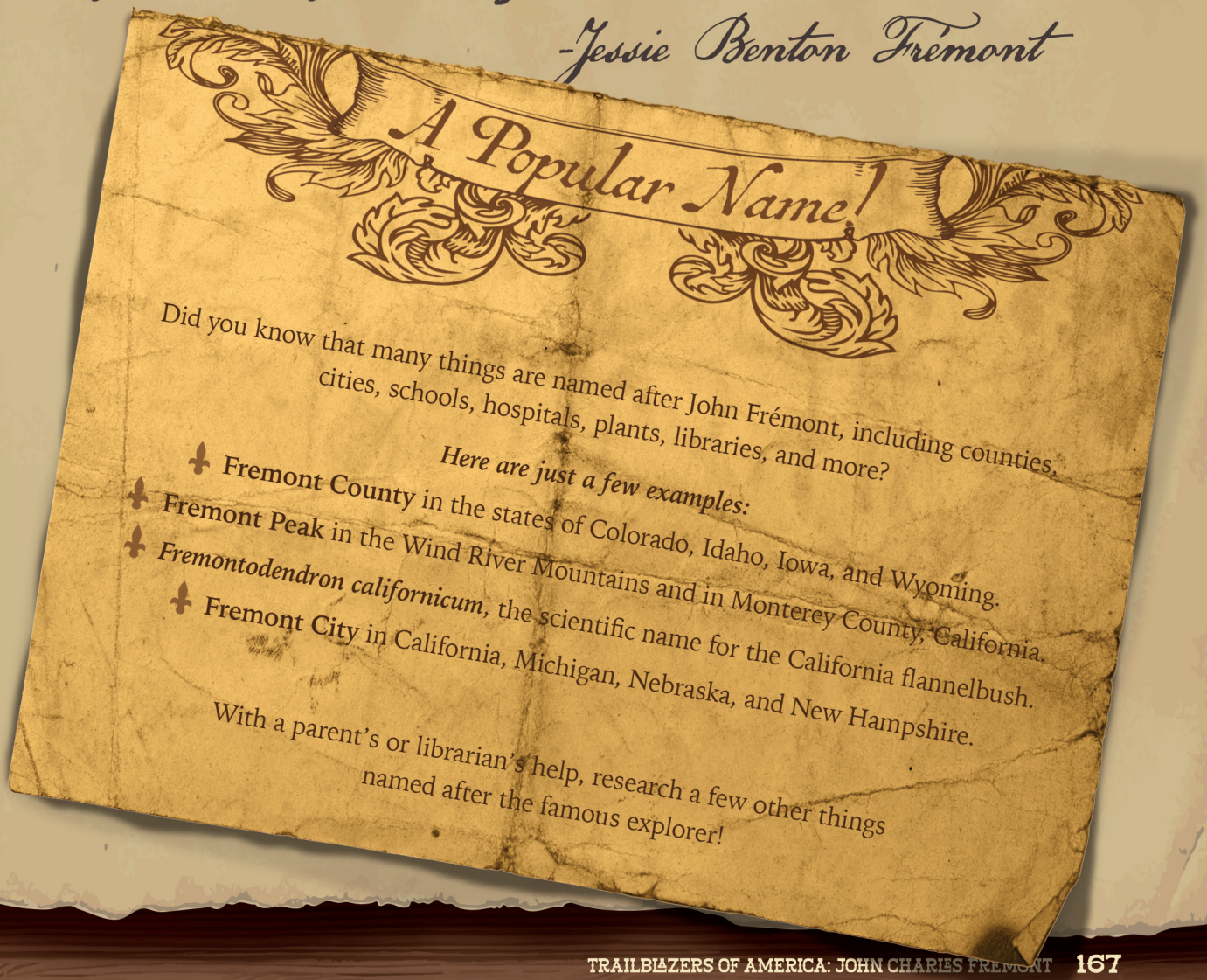
In its early days, the Republican Party's main goal was stopping the spread of slavery. Though they were a small group and much less organized than the Democratic Party, they had solid support from the Northern states, which were growing in population. By the time the 1856 election came around, there was considerable fear among the Democrats that the Republicans stood a chance.

The Southern states were already threatening to **secede** from the Union if a Republican won the election. John C. Frémont was the party's first presidential candidate, which was an interesting choice. Frémont was famous and well-loved for his explorations and his role in settling California. However, he didn't have very much political experience. He did hold anti-slavery views, but he wasn't, by any means, a leader in that arena.

The Democrats ran a long-time, politically experienced man as Frémont's opponent: James Buchanan. He was a Northerner with sympathies for the South, which gave him a strong appeal to both sides. The Democrats did everything they could to undermine Frémont's campaign, but the fearless explorer put up a good fight.

"I would as soon place my children in the midst of smallpox, as rear them under the influence of slavery."

-Jessie Benton Frémont



A Popular Name!

Did you know that many things are named after John Frémont, including counties, cities, schools, hospitals, plants, libraries, and more?

Here are just a few examples:

- **Fremont County** in the states of Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, and Wyoming.
- **Fremont Peak** in the Wind River Mountains and in Monterey County, California.
- ***Fremontodendron californicum***, the scientific name for the California flannelbush.
- **Fremont City** in California, Michigan, Nebraska, and New Hampshire.

With a parent's or librarian's help, research a few other things named after the famous explorer!

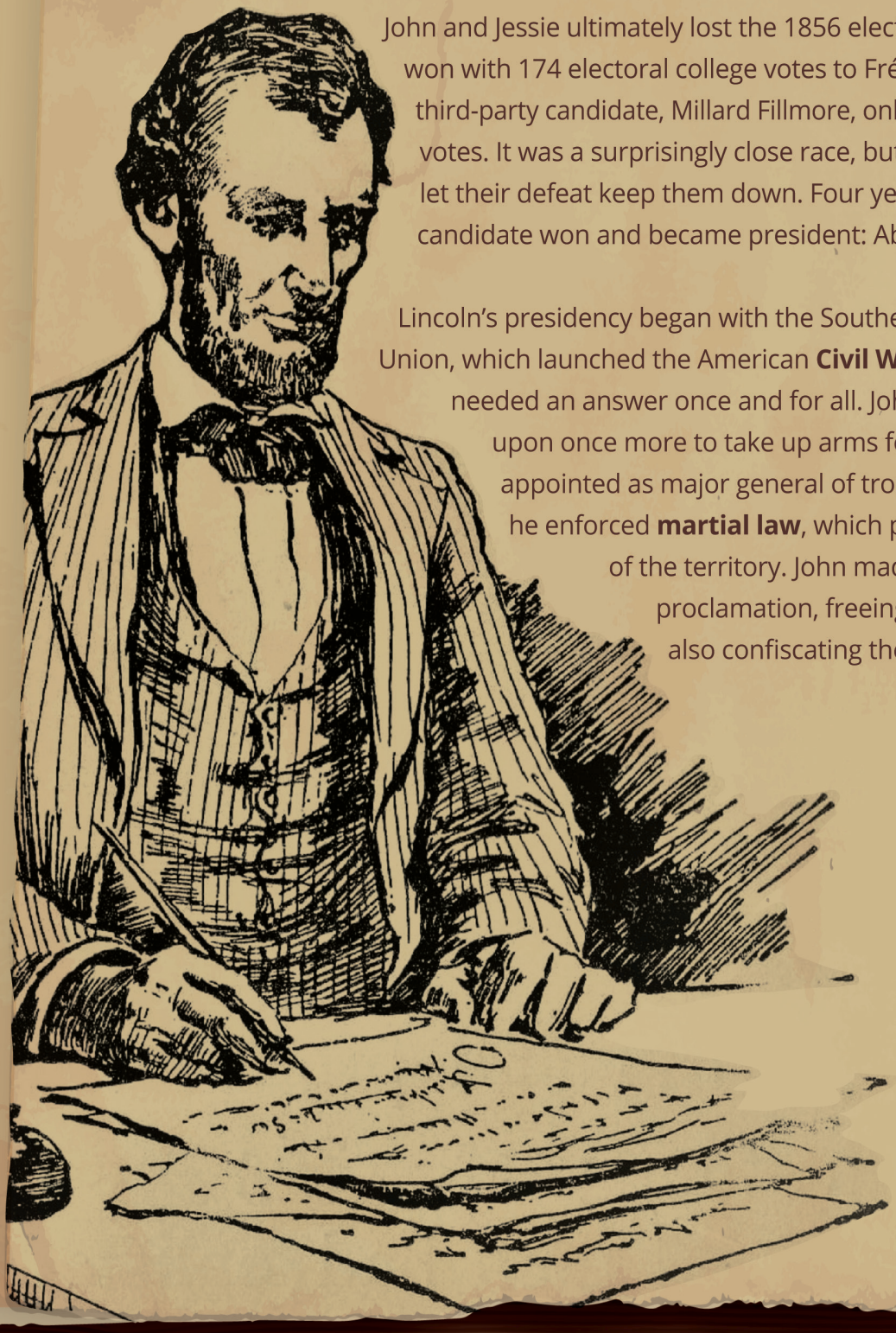
Writing Task

Write your own adventure story inspired by John Frémont's expeditions.

Imagine you are an explorer like John Frémont. Where would you go, and what would you discover? Write a story about your journey, including the challenges you face and the amazing things you find.

Draw a map of your adventure to accompany your story.

A Return to Arms



John and Jessie ultimately lost the 1856 election. James Buchanan won with 174 electoral college votes to Frémont's 114. The third-party candidate, Millard Fillmore, only received eight electoral votes. It was a surprisingly close race, but the Republicans didn't let their defeat keep them down. Four years later, the Republican candidate won and became president: Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln's presidency began with the Southern states leaving the Union, which launched the American **Civil War**. The slavery issue needed an answer once and for all. John Frémont was called upon once more to take up arms for his country. He was appointed as major general of troops in Missouri. In 1861, he enforced **martial law**, which put the military in charge of the territory. John made an **emancipation** proclamation, freeing the state's slaves and also confiscating the property of rebels.

Though Lincoln was anti-slavery, he felt Frémont's actions were too hasty and would further divide the warring country. He demanded that Frémont revoke the proclamation, and when he wouldn't, Lincoln fired him from his command. The following year, he was asked again to be in charge of a command, this time against Confederate General Stonewall Jackson, as he moved through the Appalachian Mountains. John failed to stop his opponent and lost control of his command. Angry and bitter, he resigned from the military for the second time.

Finally, John retired from public life and spent his days seeking railroad opportunities out West. Unfortunately, he lost most of his fortune from poor investments, so his family lived off of the income from Jessie's writing. John briefly served as the Governor of Arizona from 1878-1881. He passed away in New York on July 13, 1890, at the age of 77. Jessie's journey would continue another 12 years without her husband. She continued writing and remained active in the political world on the issues of women's rights and **abolition**. The respected and beloved wife of the famed explorer passed away in her home at the age of 78 in Los Angeles in 1902.



Legacy

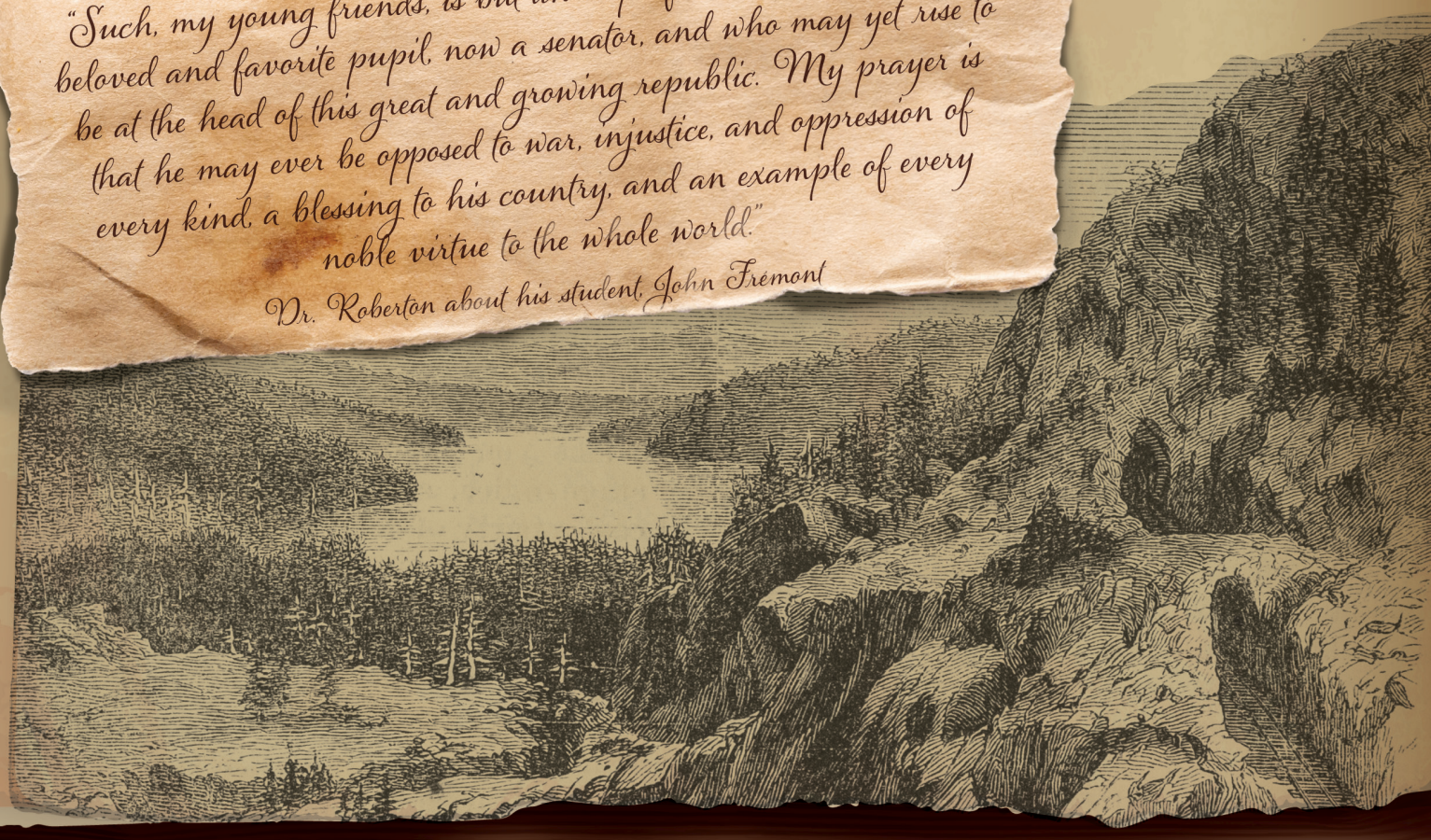
John Frémont, America's pathfinder, opened the West in a new way for his fellow countrymen. Though he wasn't the first man to walk the trails he did, he was among the first to change people's minds about the West. His reports gave Americans a new dream, one that would ultimately drive them West on the wings of Manifest Destiny.

Beyond expanding the nation's borders, John was an early supporter of the anti-slavery movement. He was the first major presidential candidate to run with that stance. He helped pave the way not just for settlers to move West, but for all Americans to be free.

Frémont lived the adventures he read about. Now, we read his name on mountain peaks, schools, libraries, and more. We remember what he discovered, but more than that, we remember the curiosity, boldness, and commitment to freedom that defined his service to his country and the people in it.

"Such, my young friends, is but an imperfect sketch of my once beloved and favorite pupil, now a senator, and who may yet rise to be at the head of this great and growing republic. My prayer is that he may ever be opposed to war, injustice, and oppression of every kind, a blessing to his country, and an example of every noble virtue to the whole world."

Dr. Roberton about his student, John Frémont



Glossary

Abolition: Ending or stopping a practice, system, or institution. In the 19th century in the United States, it referred to the elimination of the institution of slavery.

Alps: One of the largest mountain ranges in Europe. It is located in south-central Europe and spans eight countries!

Annex: To take possession of or add territory or a state to a country.

Barometer: An instrument used by scientists to measure changes in atmospheric pressure. With this information, things such as weather and altitude can be determined.

Bear Flag Revolt: A settler rebellion in northern California during the Mexican-American War. It led to the creation of the Bear Flag Republic, or the Republic of California, as an independent nation in 1846. The name came from their flag, which featured a bear facing a lone star. The republic only kept its independence for 25 days before being claimed by the United States.

California Gold Rush: A mass migration of settlers moving west to California to find gold. The migration began when gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill on the American River in 1848 and peaked in the early 1850s.

Civil War: The conflict in the United States from 1861 to 1865 between the Union government and the Confederacy, which wanted to break away from the Union and start a new, independent country.

Commissioned: In the military, it means a person has received their rank before starting their role or duty. In a more general sense, it involves being given a formal order or a task to complete.

Court-Martial: A court that tries military members for breaking military law.

Emancipation: The process of being set free from another's control, whether socially, politically, or legally.

Great Basin: A 200,000-square-mile area in North America that includes most of Nevada, half of Utah, and sections of Idaho, Wyoming, Oregon, and California. Water drains internally and has no outlet to the ocean or Gulf of Mexico. The water evaporates, absorbs, or goes into nearby lakes. The region's climate is usually hot and dry.

Great Salt Lake: Located in northern Utah, it is the largest saltwater lake in the Western Hemisphere.

Kansas-Nebraska Act: A law in 1854 that allowed people living in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide whether to have slavery there. It was based on the idea of popular sovereignty. The law angered people who were against slavery and contributed to the start of the Civil War.

Manifest Destiny: A belief in the inevitable and divine right of American settlers to expand across the entire continent in the 19th century.

Glossary

Martial Law: When the military temporarily takes over control from the civilian government, usually in drastic circumstances such as war, rebellion, or natural disaster. In this situation, the military has final authority over laws and people.

Mexican-American War: A war between the United States and Mexico from 1846 to 1848. The conflict began after a border dispute arose in Texas after its annexation. The Americans ultimately won the war, acquiring over 500,000 square miles of Mexican territory, pushing its borders to the Pacific Ocean.

Oregon Trail: A 2,170-mile route that connected the Missouri River to the Oregon Territory. It was one of two main east-west wagon routes that settlers traveled during the 1840s-1860s.

Popular Sovereignty: The idea from the 1850s in the United States that people should have the choice to allow slavery in the territory in which they live.

Providence: God's care and guidance toward mankind and the world. It has also been used as another title to refer to God.

Republican Party: One of the two major political parties in the United States, alongside the Democrat Party. The Republican Party was formed in the mid-1850s after the collapse of the Whig Party over the issue of slavery. In its early days, anti-slavery was the main issue the party stood for.

Rocky Mountains or "The Rockies": The largest mountain range in North America, comprised of many individual ranges that form a belt stretching 3,000 miles from Canada down to New Mexico.

Secede: To leave an organization or government.

Sierra Nevada: A mountain range in the western U.S. between the central valley of California and the Great Basin. It spans around 400 miles. In Spanish, "sierra" means a range of jagged mountains.

South Pass: A part of the Oregon Trail in modern Wyoming that provided easy passage through the Rocky Mountains. The 20-mile-wide gap with a flat, sloping trail made wagon travel for settlers possible in the 19th-century westward expansion.

Topographical Engineers: A branch of the U.S. Army that existed from 1838-1863 and was tasked with mapping and surveying land in the United States.

Treaty of Cahuenga: A treaty signed by John Frémont and Mexican authorities in January 1847, which ended the American conquest of California and called for both sides to enter into a ceasefire.

Whig Party: A political party formed in the early 19th century in the United States that opposed Andrew Jackson and supported tariffs and building canals and roads to boost the economy.

Wind River Mountains: One of the many independent ranges that make up the Rocky Mountains. It spans approximately 100 miles and is located in western Wyoming. One of the peaks is named after Frémont to commemorate his explorations there.

Sources

"1856." *The American Presidency Project*, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/1856. Accessed 19 June 2024.

"1856 Presidential Campaign Slogans." *PresidentsUSA*, https://www.presidentsusa.net/1856slogan.html. Accessed 19 June 2024.

"Bear Flag Revolt, June 1846." *National Parks Service*, 6 Sept. 2022, www.nps.gov/goga/learn/historyculture/bear-flag-revolt.htm. Accessed 15 June 2024.

Bicknell, John. *Lincoln's Pathfinder: John C. Frémont and the Violent Election of 1856.* Chicago Review Press, 2017.

Bicknell, John. "Slavery, Disunion, and the Violent Election of 1856." *Starting Points*, 19 April 2024, startingpointsjournal.com/slavery-disunion-and-the-violent-election-of-1856/. Accessed 19 June 2024.

Bigelow, John, and John Charles Frémont. "Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Frémont." *Northern Illinois University Digital Library*, digital.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-lincoln%3A37397. Accessed 19 June 2024.

"Buchanan Supporters Attack Presidential Candidate Frémont as a 'Black Republican' Abolitionist." *Seth Kaller, Inc.*, www.sethkaller.com/item/2038-24482-Buchanan-Supporters-Atack-Presidential-Candidate-Fr%C3%A9mont-as-a- %E2%80%9CBlack-Republican %E2%80%9D-Abolitionist. Accessed 19 June 2024.

Denton, Sally. "Frémont Steals California." *American Heritage*, Winter 2011, www.americanheritage.com/fremont-steals-california. Accessed 19 June 2024.

Frémont, John Charles, and John Torrey. *A Report on an Exploration of the Country Lying between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains: On the Line of the Kansas and Great Platte Rivers*. Printed by Order of the United States Senate, 1843.

Frémont, John Charles, and Samuel M Smucker. *The life of Col. John Charles Frémont, and his narrative of explorations and adventures, in Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon and California*. New York, Auburn, Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1856. Pdf. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/rc01001190/. Accessed 19 June 2024.

Garrison, Zach. "Frémont, John C." Civil War on the Western Border: The Missouri-Kansas Conflict, 1854-1865. *The Kansas City Public Library*, https://civilwaronthewesternborder.org/encyclopedia/fr%C3%A9mont-john-c. Accessed 19 June 2024.

Heidler, David S. and Heidler, Jeanne T. "Manifest Destiny." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 28 May 2024, https://www.britannica.com/event/Manifest-Destiny. Accessed 19 June 2024.

"Jessie Benton Frémont." *AAUW: Columbia (MO) Branch*, http://columbia-mo.aauw.net/notablewomen/womenfm/jessie-fremont/. Accessed 19 June 2024.

"John C. Fremont." *New World Encyclopedia*, https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/John_C._Fremont#:~:text=Four %20U.S.%20states%20named%20counties, also%20named%20for%20the%20explorer. Accessed 19 June 2024.

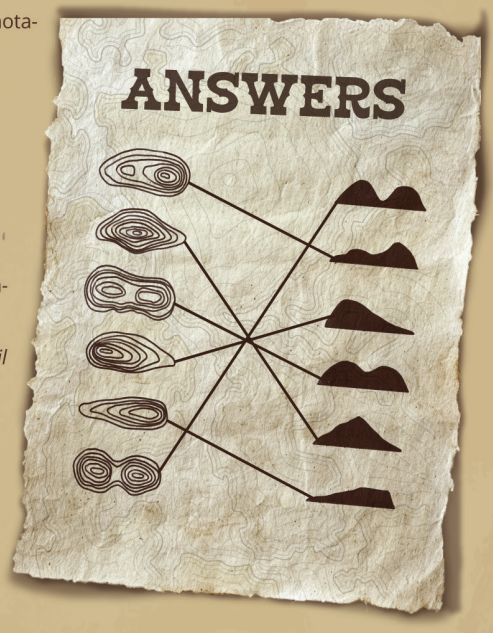
"John C. Frémont: The Pathfinder." *Library of Congress*, www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/january-31#:~:text=Fr%C3% A9mont%20(1813%2D90)%2C,orders%20on% 20January%2031%2C%201848. Accessed 19 June 2024.

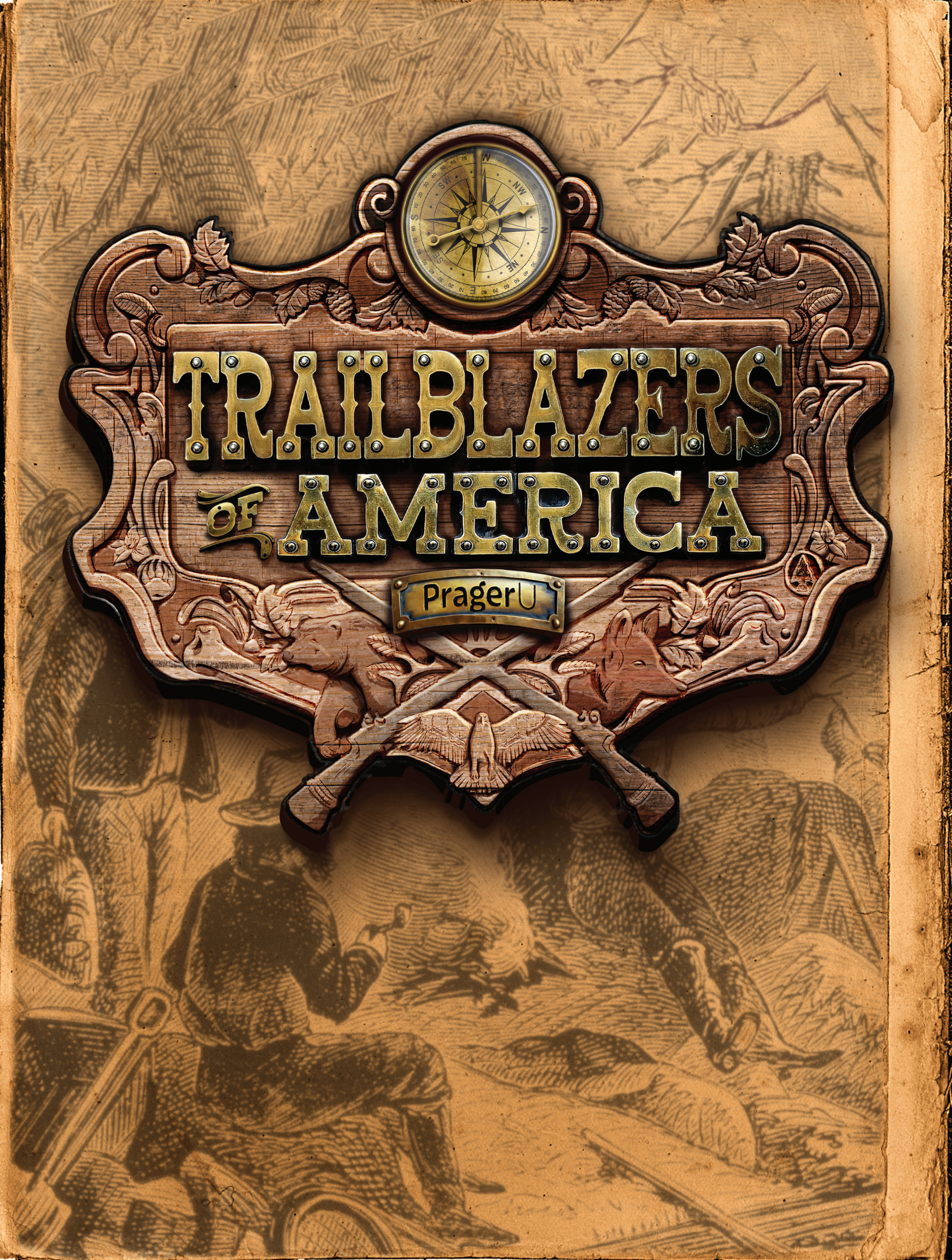
Roos, Dave. "Why the Whig Party Collapsed." *History.com*, 8 January 2021, www.citation-machine.net/mla/cite-a-website/new. Accessed 19 June 2024.

Snyder, Rachel. "Jessie Benton Fremont: Civil War Stateswoman." *Virginia Center for Civil War Studies*, civilwar.vt.edu/jessie-benton-fremont-the-civil-war-stateswoman/. Accessed 19 June 2024.

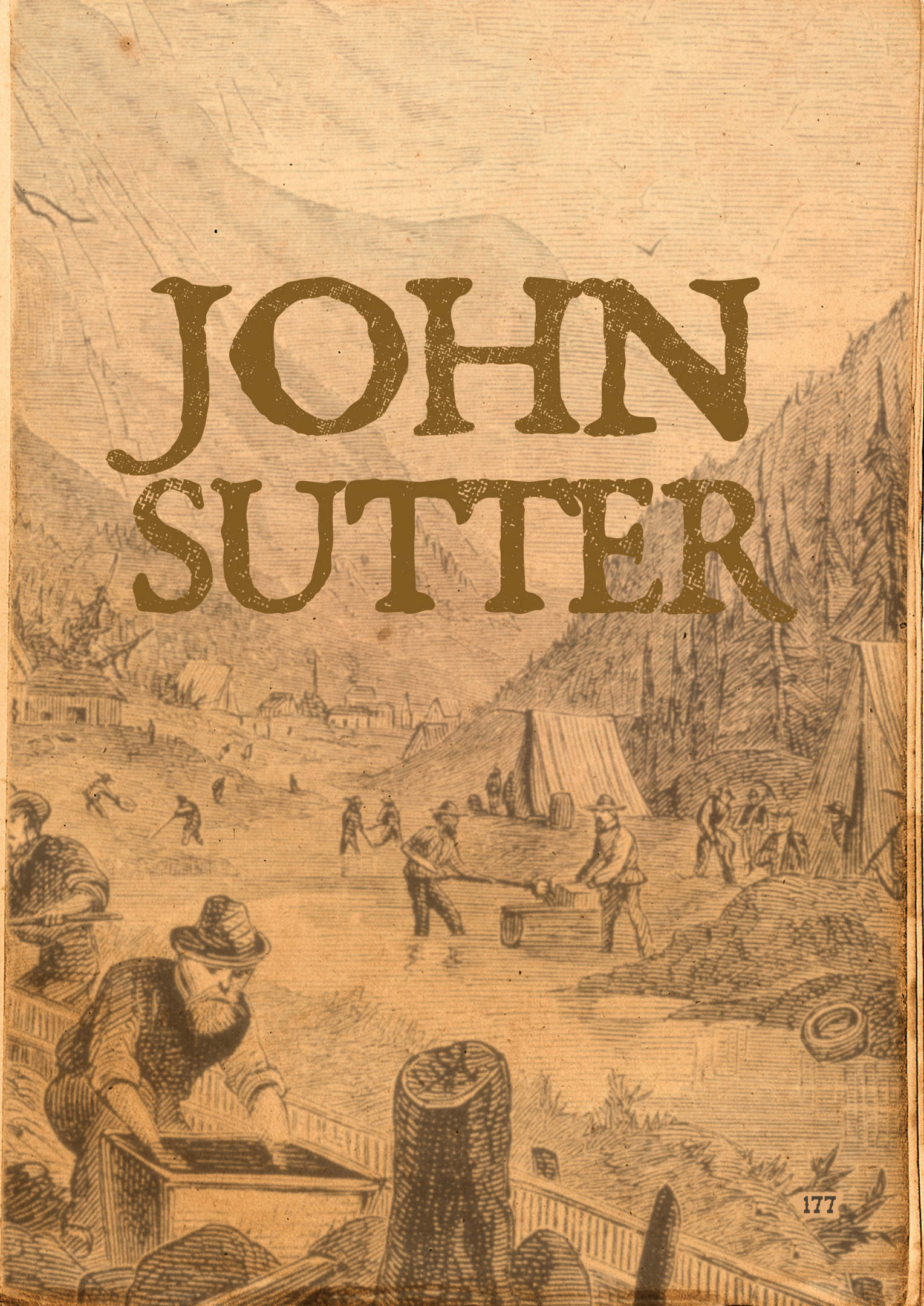
"South Pass National Historic Landmark." *Enjoy Your Parks*, enjoyyourparks.com/wyoming/top-things-to-do-in-wyoming/south-pass-national-historic-landmark/. Accessed 19 June 2024.

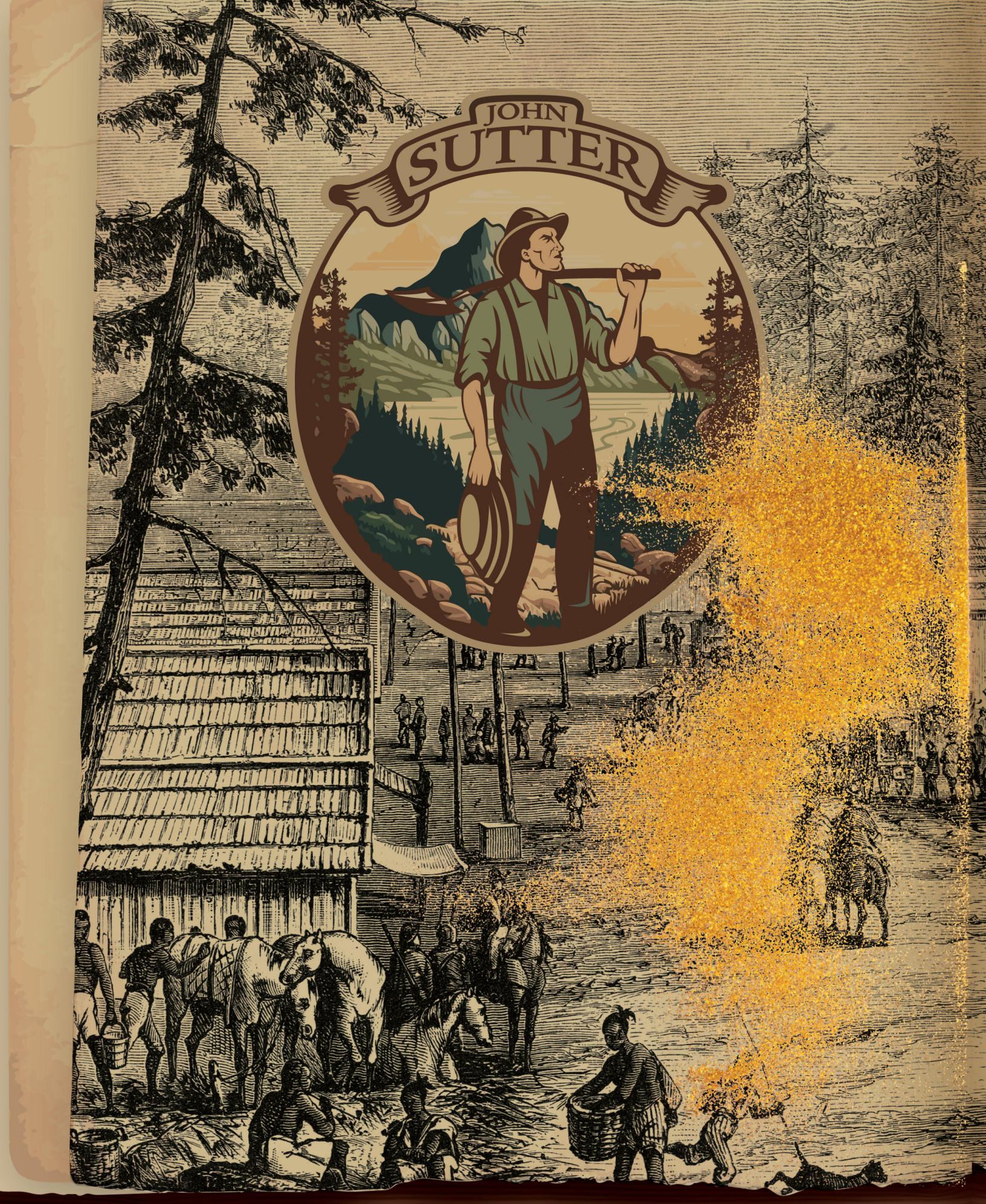
"Where Did the Term Manifest Destiny Come From?" *Encyclopædia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/video/226486/origins-Manifest-Destiny. Accessed 19 June 2024.




TRAILBLAZERS
OF AMERICA
PragerU

JOHN SUTTER




JOHN
SUTTER


"
Oh California,
that's the land
for me;
I'm off to
Sacramento with
my washbowl
on my knee.
"
—Popular folk song
from the Gold Rush

Paradise

Alta California Territory, Mexico (modern-day Sacramento), 1839

Just before the **launch boat** reached the river's edge, the man from Switzerland with the curled mustache jumped into the water and scurried to shore. *Why is he so excited*, thought the Mexican guide, *this **gringo** has no idea what he's getting into.*

The two men made their way to high ground in order to get a clear view of the surrounding area. Out in front of them, another blue-green river curved through the land and joined the one they had been traveling on for days. The European, who insisted on being called "Captain Sutter," exclaimed, "This is the perfect spot. Right here, where the rivers meet, is the place to build."

With the mighty Sierra Nevada off in the distance, the guide had to admit that the land Sutter envisioned for his fort was beautiful—but it was also dangerous. This land was lawless, and droughts, fires, and floods were only some of the risks. The guide couldn't help but chuckle.

"You disagree?" questioned the captain.

The guide replied, "I'm sorry, sir, but this part of **Alta California** is wild land. We're too far inland for the Mexican authorities to protect you, and if Indians or bandits don't get you, nature will. I really think you should settle near the coast..."

The guide kept going with his reasoning, but Sutter's mind drifted to his family thousands of miles away back in Europe. *I don't care what he thinks. This is the perfect place to build a future for Anna and the children.*

Sutter thanked the guide for his input but told him his mind was made up. "I know it's going to be tough, but I didn't leave Europe for an easy road. Along with the fort, we'll build a tannery, a blacksmith's shop, a grist mill—everything pioneers need. People will come."

"If you say so," remarked the guide with a sigh.



Sutter looked out over the massive river valley and imagined fields with rows of growing fruits and vegetables. *People will come*, he thought. *It will be paradise, and my family will watch it flourish from our front porch.*

"You'll see," Sutter explained out into the distance. "What matters is that this place doesn't care where people are from, only what they can do and what they can become."

John Sutter: Titan of Tenacity

John Sutter never shied away from a challenge. His life was filled with obstacles and even plenty of failures, but he never gave up trying to make the most of it. Along the way, he became California's most famous pioneer. When Sutter arrived, California (or Alta California as it was then known) was not yet a part of the United States. It was the northernmost territory controlled by Mexico, but only a few places near the Pacific Ocean coastline were actually inhabited by Mexicans. Inland, there were a small number of Native Americans, but mostly, it was an untamed ferocious wilderness.

In hopes of beginning the process of taming California, the Mexican government agreed to allow Sutter to settle about 50,000 acres of his choosing and make it his home. After an extensive search, the pioneer from Europe picked the land surrounding the **confluence** of what would later be named the Sacramento and American Rivers, and it was a wise decision. The spot sits between the San Francisco Bay and the Sierra Nevada, and the fort and mill he built there made him a key player in California's early history.

Sutter's vision of a farming colony called "New Switzerland" (or, as the **Californios** called it, *Nueva Helvetia*) did not fully materialize, but his presence and hospitality shaped the state we know today. From his attempt to help the starving **Donner Party** to the fort's role in the **Bear Flag Revolt** that launched California to statehood, the Swiss visionary was present at historic moments again and again. The famous **California Gold Rush** even began at Sutter's **sawmill** on the American River.



In fact, it was the Gold Rush that ultimately ended Sutter's California adventure, but the forward-looking immigrant never gave up. With a larger-than-life appetite to build his dreams, Sutter moved from one opportunity to another with **tenacity**. More importantly, his risky, ambitious trailblazing paved the way for others. For pioneers on the West Coast, his fort was a friendly and welcoming haven—a place for rest, supplies, news, and shelter.

Thanks to Sutter's hustle and hospitality, the state of California would become one large welcome mat for risk-takers. Millions like him would one day travel to a new, untested place filled with opportunity.

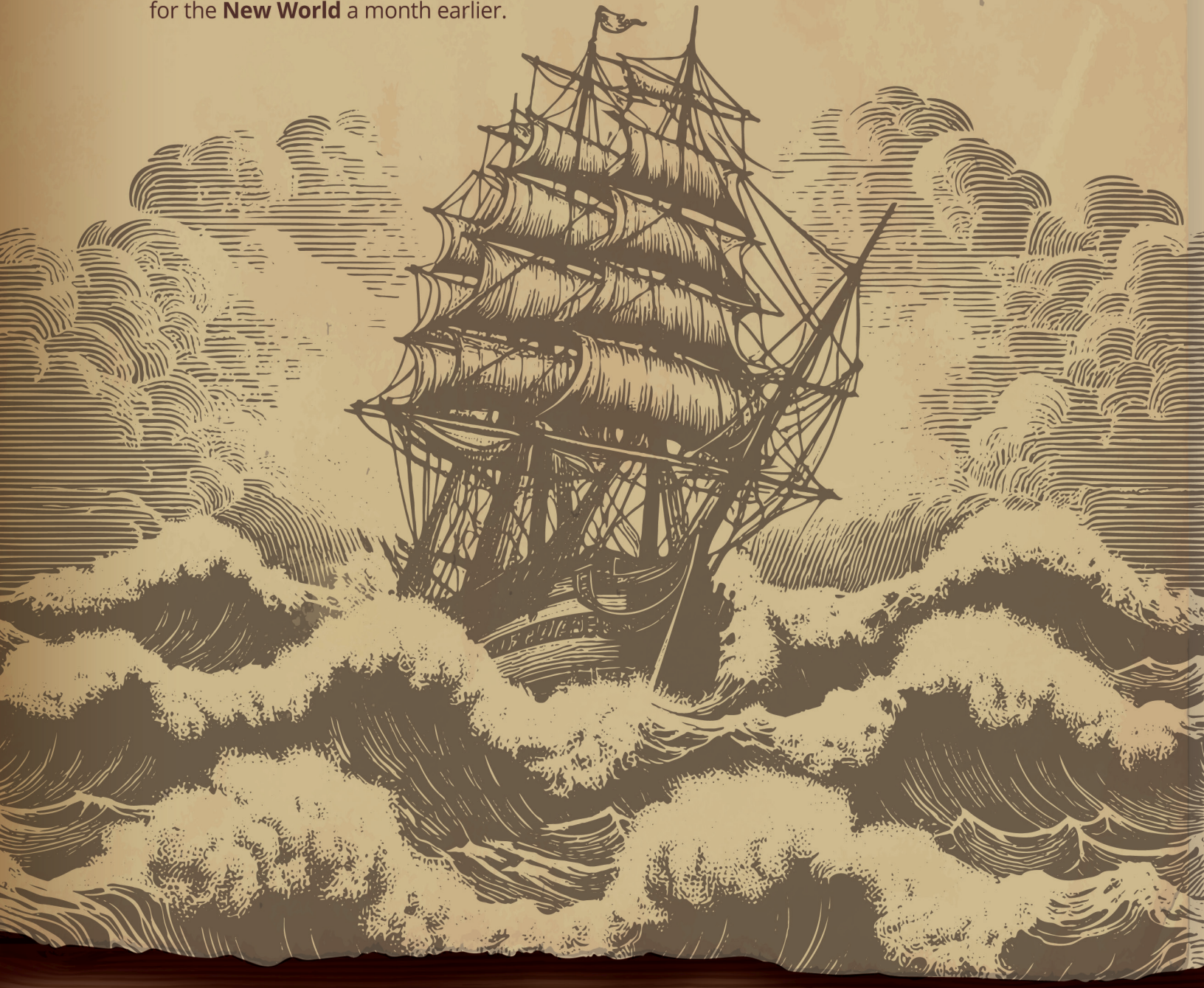
On the Move

John Sutter believed he was born for greatness. The man who would attempt to build his own colony in California was born in 1803 in the small town of Kandern, Germany. His name at birth was Johann August Suter, and like countless immigrants, he changed it later to sound more American.

While Sutter's parents were not rich, they made sure their son was educated. He was eloquent, well-read, and itching with ambition. When he finished school, Sutter moved to the neighboring country of Switzerland, where he apprenticed for a bookseller in the city of Basel. In the nearby town of Aarberg, he met a girl named Anna and began **courting** her. Before long, the two were married and raising five children.

With a little money in his pocket, Sutter started a **haberdashery**—a store that sold men's clothing and other dry goods—but thanks to a shady business partner (along with Sutter's own reckless spending), the store collapsed under debt. It also didn't help that Switzerland had business laws penalizing Sutter for being a German-born foreigner, and these types of restrictions made the freedoms of America attractive to him.

Having failed at his first business attempt, Sutter joined the Swiss military in 1828 and rose to the rank of under-lieutenant. This gave him the basis for a flashy new identity—in America, he would start introducing himself as "Captain Sutter of the Swiss Guard" to impress people. In the meantime, military service did not solve his money problems. In June of 1834, Sutter's **creditors** issued a warrant for his arrest... but Sutter was long gone. With his wife Anna's help, he had already fled Switzerland and sailed out of France for the **New World** a month earlier.



New World

For most people, failure can be devastating, but Sutter's failure in Switzerland gave him a driving motivation to succeed in the New World.

Sutter arrived in New York City in July of 1834, and like many others, his path did not lead directly to California. Traveling with other European immigrants, he made his way to Indiana, Missouri, and as far south as New Mexico. Ever the businessman, Sutter traded mules for a profit, and he even tried running a hotel. With so many European immigrants moving west, his fluency in French and German proved advantageous, but times were tough. When times were really tough, "Captain Sutter" hustled and found jobs working as a clerk to survive.

Despite his hard work, none of his efforts were profitable, and Sutter decided it was time to risk it all and venture into the unknown. The Captain packed what belongings he had and began a long and uncertain journey to a place called Alta California.

At that time, California was a lawless, undeveloped Mexican territory. To help tame the rough country with limitless potential, government authorities were offering land to anyone daring enough to settle there. To a foreigner like Sutter, struggling to make a name for himself, the offer sounded perfect.

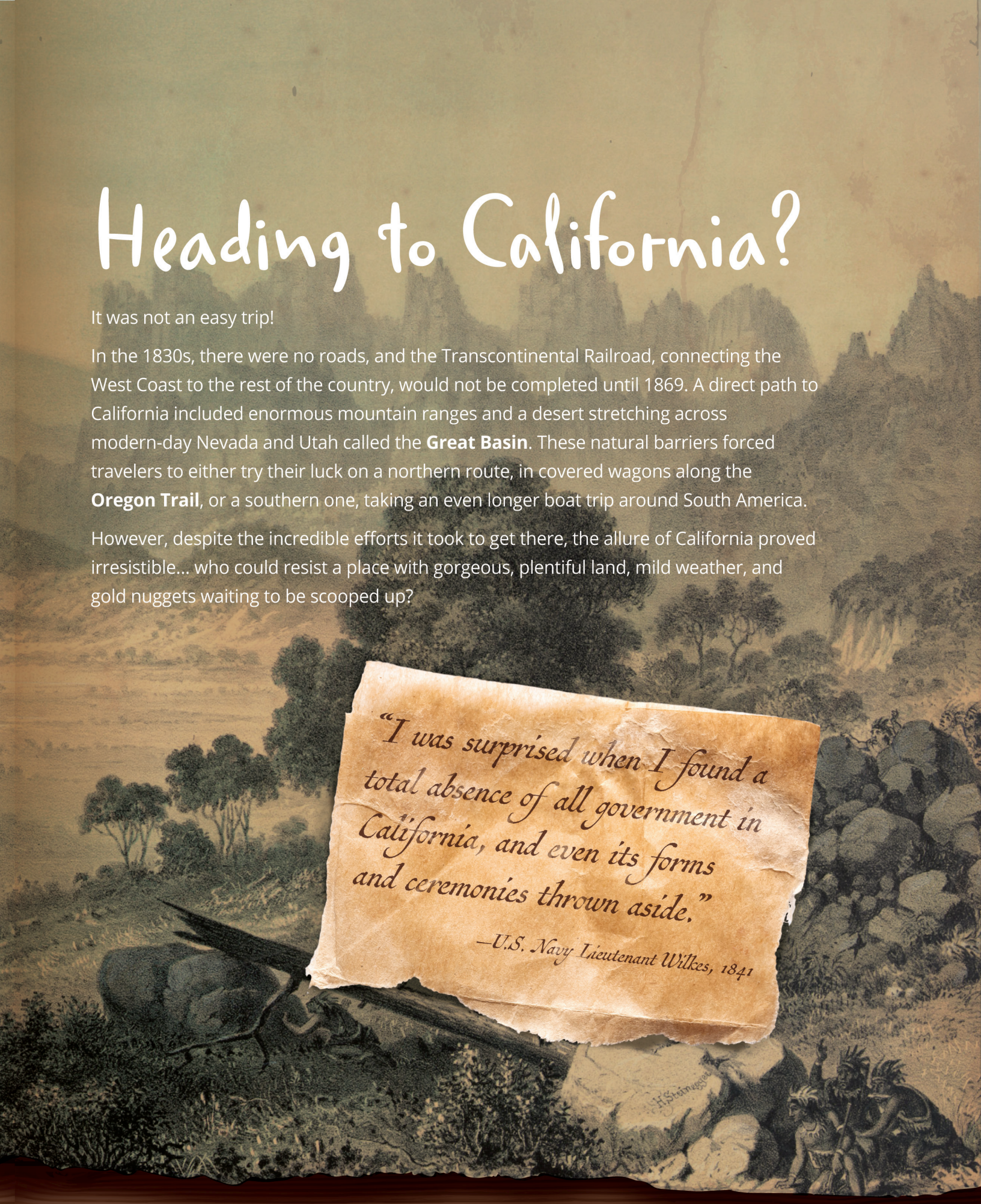


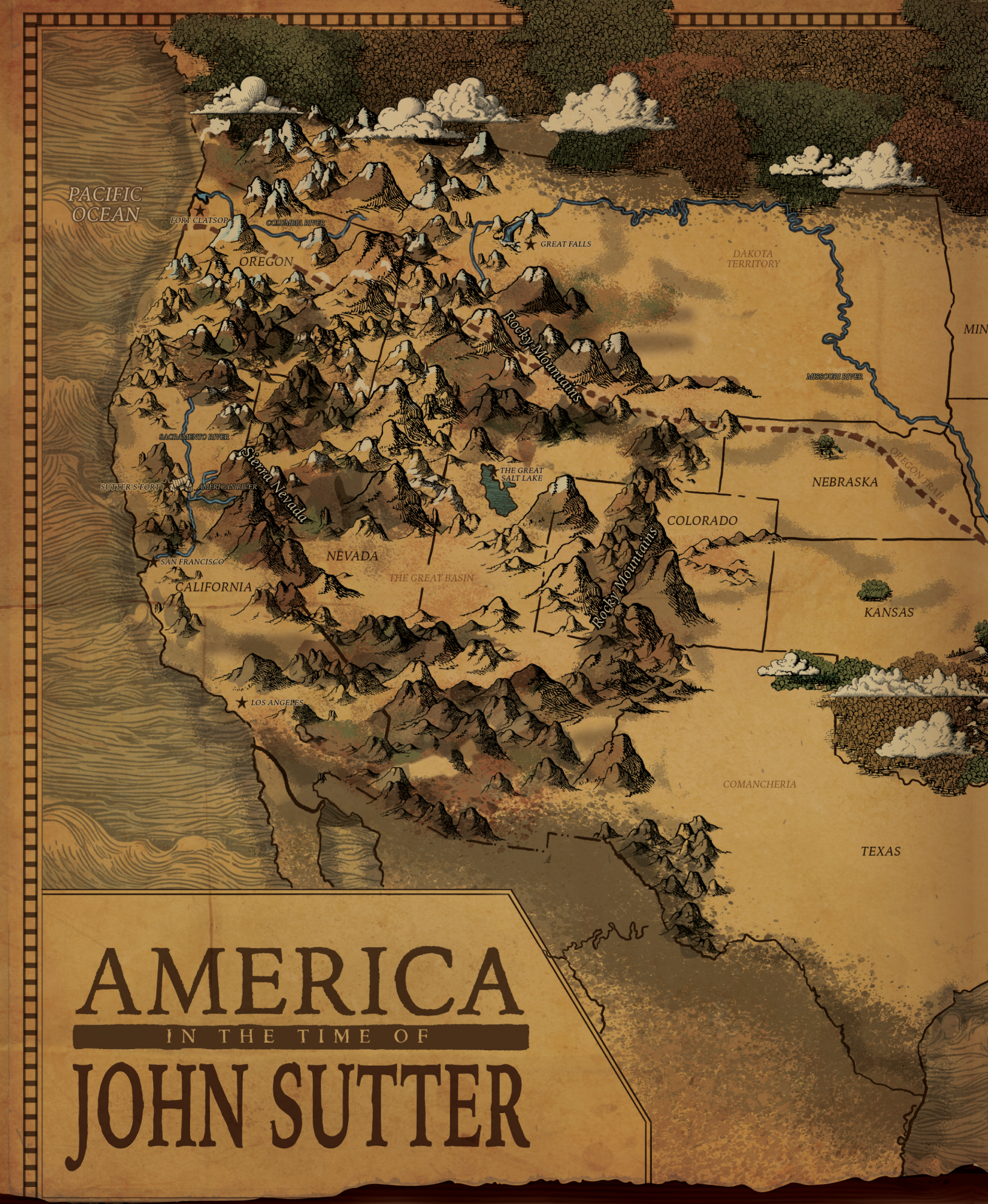
Heading to California?

It was not an easy trip!

In the 1830s, there were no roads, and the Transcontinental Railroad, connecting the West Coast to the rest of the country, would not be completed until 1869. A direct path to California included enormous mountain ranges and a desert stretching across modern-day Nevada and Utah called the **Great Basin**. These natural barriers forced travelers to either try their luck on a northern route, in covered wagons along the **Oregon Trail**, or a southern one, taking an even longer boat trip around South America.

However, despite the incredible efforts it took to get there, the allure of California proved irresistible... who could resist a place with gorgeous, plentiful land, mild weather, and gold nuggets waiting to be scooped up?




PACIFIC OCEAN
FORT CLATSOP
COLUMBIA RIVER
OREGON
GREAT FALLS
DAKOTA TERRITORY
Rocky Mountains
MIN
MISSOURI RIVER
SACRAMENTO RIVER
Sierra Nevada
SUTTER'S FORT
AMERICAN RIVER
THE GREAT SALT LAKE
NEBRASKA
OREGON TRAIL
COLORADO
NEVADA
SAN FRANCISCO
THE GREAT BASIN
CALIFORNIA
Rocky Mountains
KANSAS
LOS ANGELES
COMANCHERIA
TEXAS
AMERICA
IN THE TIME OF
JOHN SUTTER


MAINE
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON
NEW YORK
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
NEW YORK CITY
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
DETROIT
IOWA
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
CHICAGO
Appalachian Mountains
PHILADELPHIA
NEW JERSEY
PENNSYLVANIA
OHIO
INDIANA
DELAWARE
ILLINOIS
WEST VIRGINIA
D.C.
MARYLAND
MISSOURI
OHIO RIVER
VIRGINIA
ST. LOUIS
KENTUCKY
CUMBERLAND GAP
NORTH CAROLINA
TENNESSEE
ARKANSAS
Appalachian Mountains
SOUTH CAROLINA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CHARLESTON
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
LOUISIANA
NEW ORLEANS
FLORIDA

HEAD OUT WEST!

TRAVEL CHOICES

1839

DON'T MISS THE GOLD RUSH

If you were heading to California in the mid-1800s, you could:

1

Leave from Boston and sail around two continents.

On a budget? Not a fan of fresh fruits and vegetables? Take the scenic ocean voyage of your dreams! On a **schooner** crammed with cargo and other adventurers, you'll sail down the Atlantic seaboard, pass through the shimmering Caribbean, and head for **Cape Horn**, the bottom tip of South America.

Once you're there, watch out for storms, jagged rocks, and blustery winds... and if you make it around the cape, you're halfway there!

Great option for world travelers... but remember, it could take up to eight months.





2

Leave from New York and cross Panama.

Not interested in seeing South America? Cut eight thousand miles off your trip by stopping at the exotic Panama **isthmus**! Once you're there, it's sixty miles of river, swamp, and thick, noisy jungle to the Pacific Ocean. If the mosquitos and malaria bother you, just remember that you're toughening up for California's bears!

Once you've crossed over to the Pacific side of Panama, don't forget the rest of the trip. With any luck, another boat will arrive to take you up the coast.

One month total... assuming you make it out of the jungle.

3

Leave from Missouri and take the California-Oregon Trail.

Nothing like six months in a bumpy wooden wagon to test your endurance... but once you arrive in pristine Oregon or California, you'll have done it! Slow and steady wins this 2,000-mile race.

Reaching the West Coast by land means plenty of adventure. Between storms, prairie fires, slithering rattlesnakes, Indian attacks, diseases like cholera, and treacherous river crossings, there's plenty of thrills for the whole family! Grouping up with other wagon trains and hiring a guide is a must. Stock up on supplies before you leave Forth Worth, Texas or Independence, Missouri.

Still not sure?

6,000 wagons and 40,000 yearly passengers can't be wrong!

A FIELD GUIDE TO

THE WEST COAST & SIERRAS ANIMALS



CALIFORNIA GRIZZLY BEAR

A fierce, intimidating brown bear that once lived in the mountains of Northern California. The "Bear Flag Republic" was named after it, and the grizzly stands proudly on California's flag today. Sadly, the last California Grizzly may have been spotted in 1924.

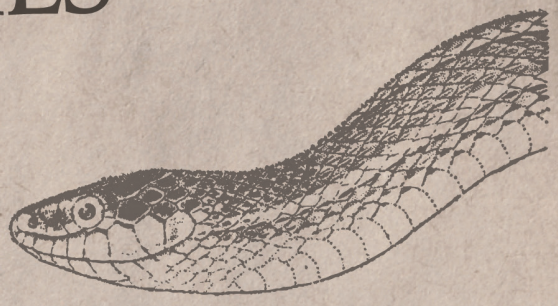


KIT FOX FRONT PAW

KIT FOX HIND PAW

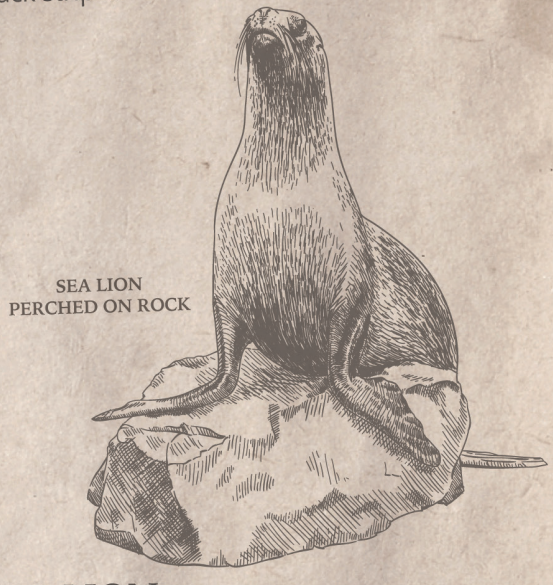
KIT FOX

A small fox native to California's plains, hills, and Central Valley. This skinny mammal has wide ears, small foot pads, and a bushy tail.



GARTER SNAKE

A colorful snake found in freshwater habitats along the San Francisco peninsula. Also called the "San Francisco Garter," these snakes grow 40 or 45 inches long. They stand out for their greenish-blue belly and red, white, and black stripes.



SEA LION PERCHED ON ROCK

SEA LION

A smart, playful seal native to the West Coast. Known for their loud barks and acrobatics, sea lions are favorites at aquariums and marine shows. In the wild, they gather on docks and jetties, creating noisy "haul-outs" that have become iconic sights along California's coast.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

THE WEST COAST & SIERRAS PLANTS



CALIFORNIA POPPY

When this famous, orange-gold flower blooms in the spring, Californians travel far and wide to take pictures of it. For its sunny-golden color, this is the state's official flower.



COFFEEBERRY

A dry, evergreen shrub that gets its name from clusters of dark, reddish-brown berries. Careful... they might look like coffee beans, but they do not taste like them.



SITKA SPRUCE

A sturdy, tall evergreen tree that grows along the northern Pacific Rim. Its wood was once prized for building ships and musical instruments. Today, Sitka spruce provides a vital habitat for birds, small mammals, and amphibians.



REDWOOD

California's giant, awe-inspiring redwood trees cover much of its northern coastline. Thick, tough, and often soggy, redwoods can grow upwards of 375 feet and live for thousands of years.

Getting to California

As it turns out, John Sutter came to California by land *and* sea. He completed the first leg of the trip as part of an expedition with the American Fur Company by rolling across the plains on a wagon train. Food was scarce, and sickness and fatigue were constant problems, but the trip brought Sutter to modern-day Wyoming. There, he hired an Indian boy as a guide and hiked over Idaho's mountains to the Columbia River, which would lead him to Fort Vancouver in modern-day Washington.

With the Pacific Northwest's tall trees and abundant wildlife, an adventurer from Europe must have thought he was close! However, California was still six hundred miles to the south, and getting there over land would mean crossing the tall Klamath Mountains during winter. Eager to get going, Sutter decided on a less direct way. He hopped on a ship to Hawaii, or as people in the mid-1800s called them, the Sandwich Islands.

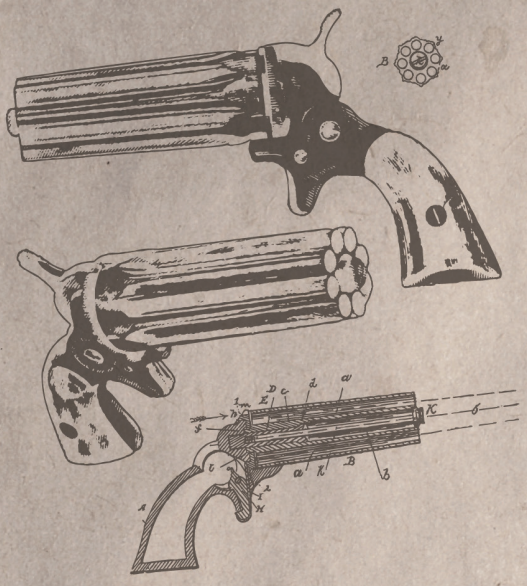
Despite the islands being a tropical destination, Sutter didn't treat the trip as a vacation. Along the way, "Captain John Sutter" made important connections with government officials and people who would finance his plan for a new colony. Upon arrival in Hawaii, Sutter's gift for showmanship and telling wild stories about his most interesting life even impressed the Hawaiian King Kamehameha III. By the time he left, Sutter had recruited ten Hawaiian laborers to help build his new colony. With those ten servants and $3,000 in start-up capital from a man named William French, Sutter and his team sailed up to a Russian settlement in modern-day Alaska called New Archangel. From there, they took another boat and followed the south-flowing current down the Pacific Coastline to the San Francisco Bay.

At last, he had reached California.



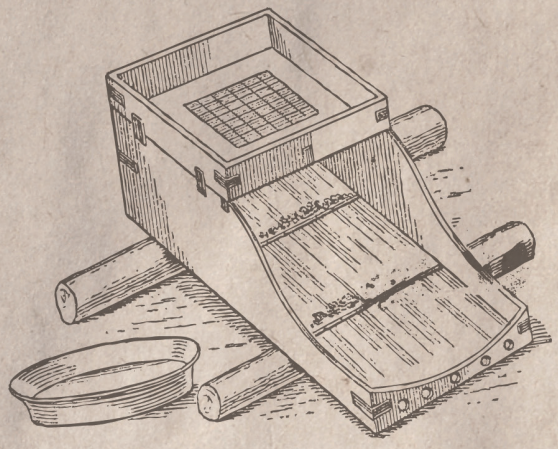
A FIELD GUIDE TO

THE WEST COAST & SIERRAS TECHNOLOGY



PEPPERBOX REVOLVER

A handgun with several barrels instead of one. Popular from the 1830s through the Civil War, the pepperbox paved the way for the faster, deadlier revolver pistol.



SLUICE BOX

These simple, wooden troughs helped prospectors search for gold in rushing water by catching mud and gravel.



BLUE JEANS

The next time you wear a pair of blue jeans, thank the Gold Rush. In 1871, Jacob W. Davis and Levi Strauss cut pants out of a tough material called denim and sold them to miners. Those ripped, stylish jeans at the store would come much later.



PICKAXE

A solid, T-shaped tool with a metal head. If you're prying open rocks and boulders to search for gold, the sturdy pickaxe is a must-have.

... and Getting Started

Mexico was not giving land in its northernmost territory to just *anyone*. To receive permission to own land in Alta California, one had to be a Mexican citizen, Roman Catholic, and committed to furthering Mexico's interests in the region. Authorities wanted settlers' help in stopping Indian raids and also hoped to keep eager Americans from moving into the territory.

Sutter made his way to the seat of government, Mexico's **Custom House** in Monterey. There, and with letters of recommendation from people he'd met, he had to convince Governor Juan Batista de Alvarado that he would be a capable commander of a new colony. Again, Sutter's hustle and **charisma** prevailed. When Alvarado awarded him about 50,000 acres of land, he promptly bought a schooner, several launch boats, and sailed up the Sacramento River to claim his prize.

Sailing through the tricky **California Delta** and up the river took days. Along the way, the expedition met Indians; they proved helpful, but communicating with them slowed down the search for a good location. That spot turned out to be the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers.

Once they landed, one of Sutter's first steps was setting up a cannon and shooting it off to impress (and no doubt, terrify) the Indians who lived nearby. Tools and equipment for a tannery, a threshing floor, and a blacksmith's shop were brought in. Sutter's team of Hawaiian and Indian workers got busy building the fort's first structure—a one-story building with a kitchen, a blacksmith's shop, and living quarters.

Finally, after six years and thousands of miles traveled, Sutter's ambitious dream of running his own colony was coming to life.

Why Was Sutter's Fort Important?

Sutter's Fort quickly became a hub for commerce and development in the wild region. The nearest city, Yerba Buena (modern-day San Francisco), was nearly ninety miles away. People came to the fort for supplies, leisure, employment, and protection.

Location

Sutter built his fort on high ground a mile south of where the American and Sacramento Rivers connect. This meant the fort could withstand high waters during winter flooding and be seen by land or river up to two miles away.

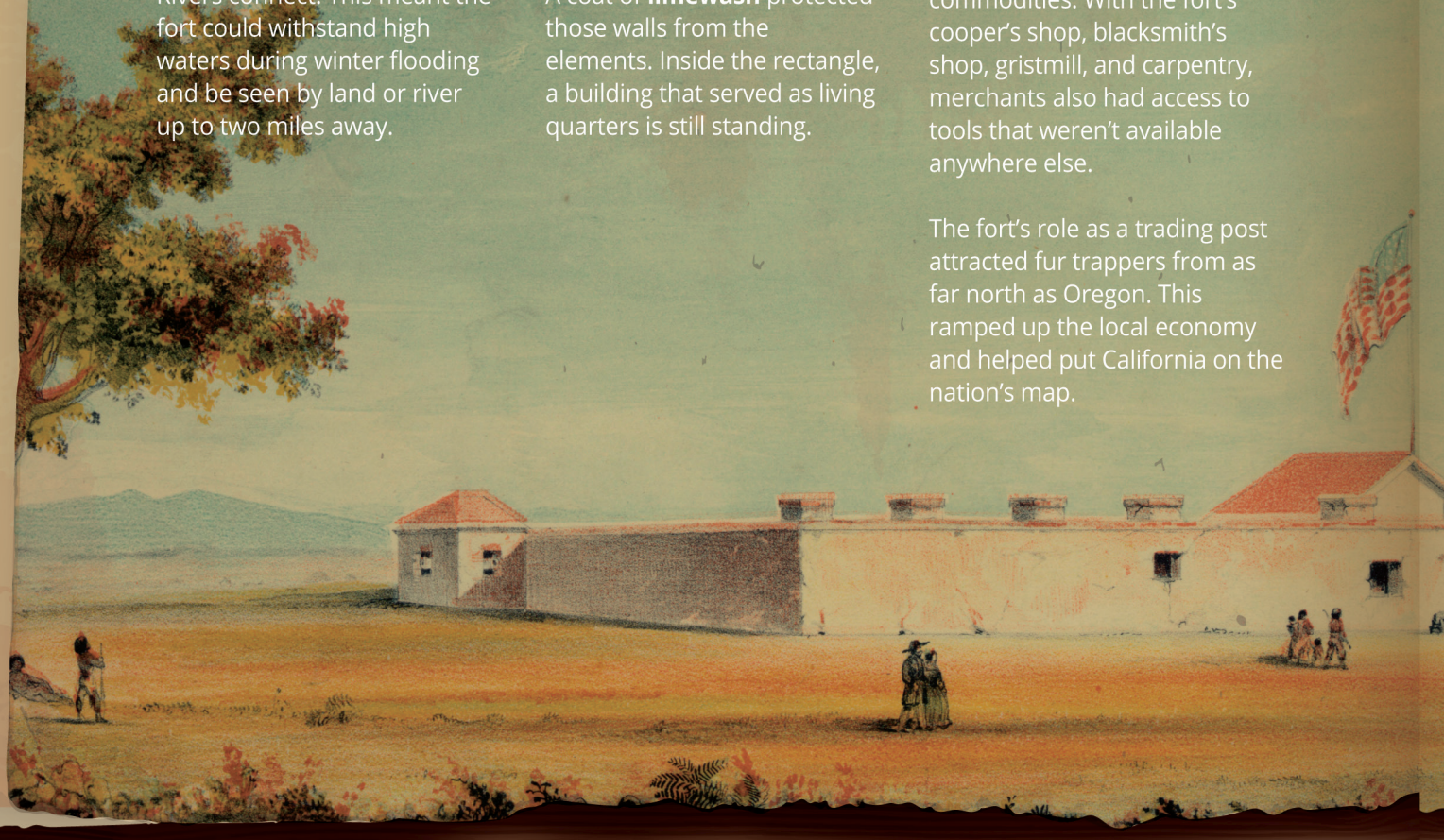
Structure

Sutter's Fort was built in a rectangle, with adobe walls made of clay, straw, and sand. A coat of **limewash** protected those walls from the elements. Inside the rectangle, a building that served as living quarters is still standing.

Trading Center

Some of the fort's rooms served as shops for merchants selling crops, beaver pelts, or other commodities. With the fort's cooper's shop, blacksmith's shop, gristmill, and carpentry, merchants also had access to tools that weren't available anywhere else.

The fort's role as a trading post attracted fur trappers from as far north as Oregon. This ramped up the local economy and helped put California on the nation's map.



Blacksmith's Shop

Need a horseshoe? How about a barrel full of nails? The fort's busy blacksmith's shop had what you needed or could make it. Here, with a furnace that heated metal up to 3,000 degrees, workers forged or repaired everyday tools. Everything from shovels, pans, pickaxes, traps, and saws to kitchen utensils could be found here—but if you wanted that barrel full of nails, you needed help from the **carpentry**.

Mexican Civil Flag

As a Mexican regional representative of the Mexican government, Sutter did not fly the American flag. Instead, he flew the Mexican civil flag for official visitors—a design used by merchants that looked very similar to Mexico's flag.

On July 11th, 1846, the Mexican civil flag was taken down thanks to the Bear Flag Revolt.

Cannons

While the fort was never attacked, bandits and Indian attacks were common in the area. To counter lawlessness, the fort's mounted cannons served as a sign of force and authority.

Kitchen

Come and get it! As part of his deal with ranch hands, Indian workers, and indentured servants who kept his fort running, Sutter provided **chow.** The fort's kitchen worked slowly—the brick oven used for baking bread took four hours to heat up. On a given day, the kitchen fed around 200 workers.

Clerk's Office

Payday? Signing a contract? Head on over to the clerk's office. Here, the fort's workers took their wages in material goods that could be traded because hard currency was scarce. They could also trade several days of work for a knife, a blanket, or a cast iron pot. Expensive items like saddles could cost up to *forty* days of work.

The first gold flakes found by James Marshall were also tested here—you might say California's Gold Rush became official in this room!

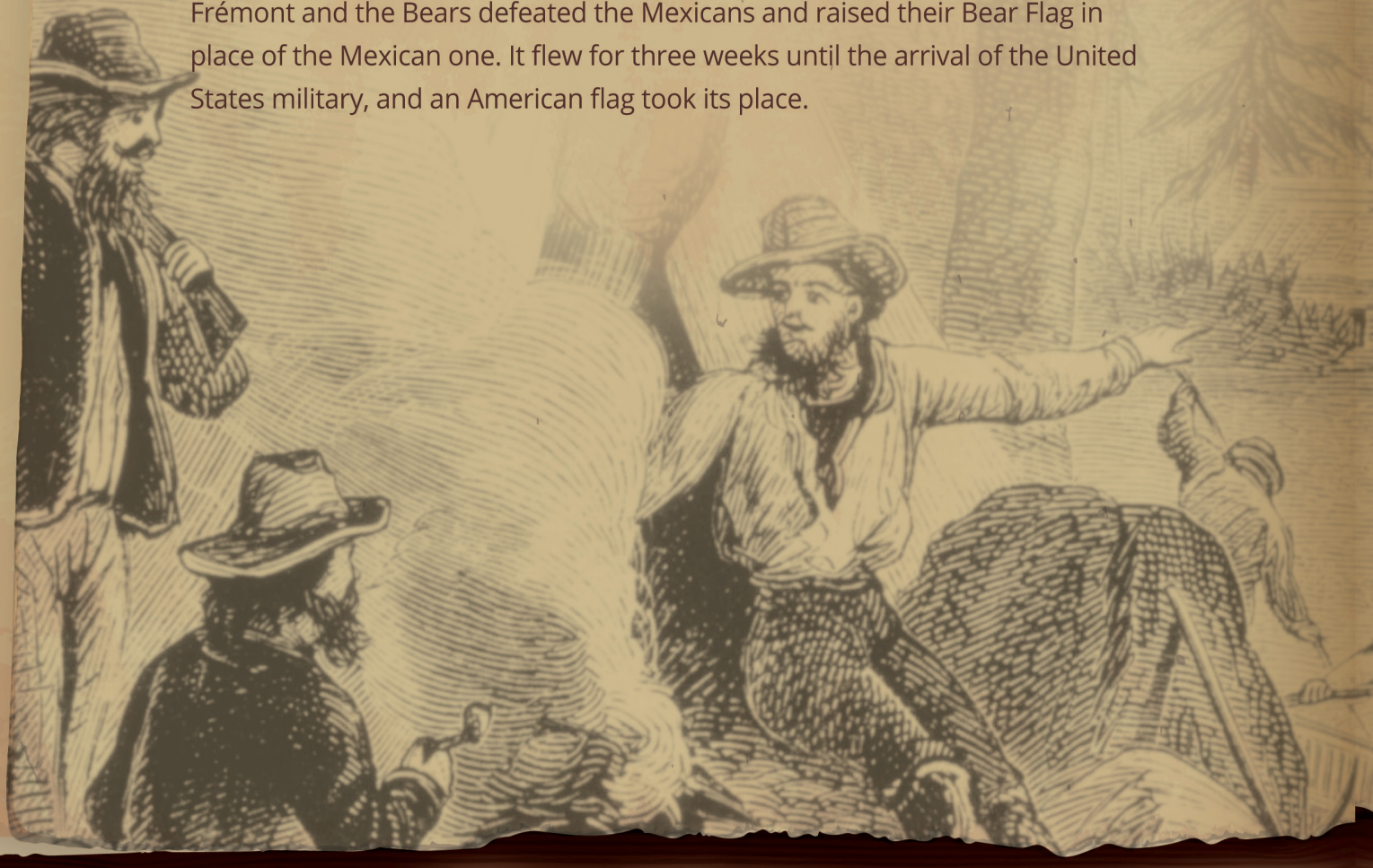


Bad News "Bears"

By 1846, Sutter's Fort was a popular destination for American pioneers, and Mexican authorities were not happy. Men like John Sutter were representatives of the Mexican government; they were supposed to *stop* Americans from coming out, not attract them. With the rising number of non-Mexican settlers arriving at Sutter's colony, it was time to take action.

In April of 1846, a new governor named José Castro issued a proclamation: all non-Mexican settlers had to leave California by the end of the year. This sparked worry in the settlers, and meetings began taking place at Sutter's Fort. U.S. Army Captain John Frémont encouraged revolt, and he and a group of men nicknamed the "Bears" (after the flag they created to represent California) rode west to take over the Mexican barracks in Sonoma.

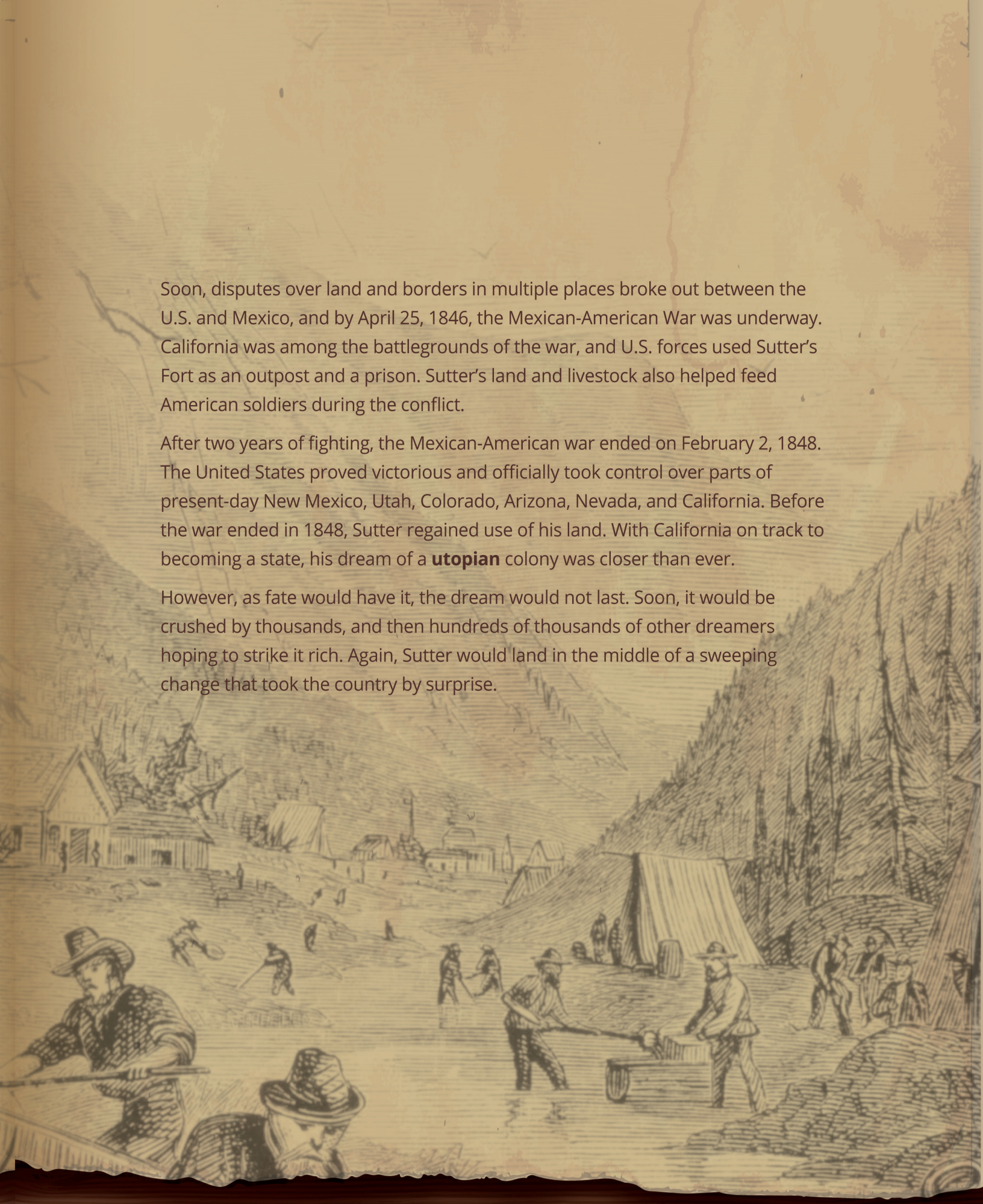
Frémont and the Bears defeated the Mexicans and raised their Bear Flag in place of the Mexican one. It flew for three weeks until the arrival of the United States military, and an American flag took its place.



Soon, disputes over land and borders in multiple places broke out between the U.S. and Mexico, and by April 25, 1846, the Mexican-American War was underway. California was among the battlegrounds of the war, and U.S. forces used Sutter's Fort as an outpost and a prison. Sutter's land and livestock also helped feed American soldiers during the conflict.

After two years of fighting, the Mexican-American war ended on February 2, 1848. The United States proved victorious and officially took control over parts of present-day New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and California. Before the war ended in 1848, Sutter regained use of his land. With California on track to becoming a state, his dream of a **utopian** colony was closer than ever.

However, as fate would have it, the dream would not last. Soon, it would be crushed by thousands, and then hundreds of thousands of other dreamers hoping to strike it rich. Again, Sutter would land in the middle of a sweeping change that took the country by surprise.



If Word Gets Out...

Clerk's Office, Sutter's Fort, January 1848

"Well, whaddya think?" the carpenter named James murmured, tugging at his beard.

Without speaking, John closed the heavy door behind them. Some light from the window's edge escaped and brightened the floor, but it was dark enough for a test. The smells of ink, musty paper, and dried candle wax floated around them.

"Let's see," John said, laying the ragged cloth on a table. Gently, as if he were nursing a wound, he tugged the cloth flat. *Yep, there it was*. The orange-yellow flakes were no larger than clumps of rice, but the gleam was unmistakable.

John waved James over to join him. Having ridden forty miles and brought what he'd found on the river directly to the fort, the carpenter had earned a proper look. Over the next thirty minutes, they ran tests with water, balance scales, and even nitric acid. Through every test, the flakes glistened back at them; this was gold all right.

"It's gold," John said finally. "At least twenty-three carat."

The two men laughed and smiled, but then John's tone grew serious.

"Mark what I say," he whispered. "If word gets out, you or I won't see a penny from this. But if you do exactly what I tell you..."

The plan made sense. But the itching, restless look in the carpenter's eyes told John it would never work. The crisp dollar bill he'd given James to buy his silence might slow it down, but sooner or later, word *would* get out.

The carpenter left, and as Sutter stood in the doorway, his mind drifted. For a moment, the fear melted away.

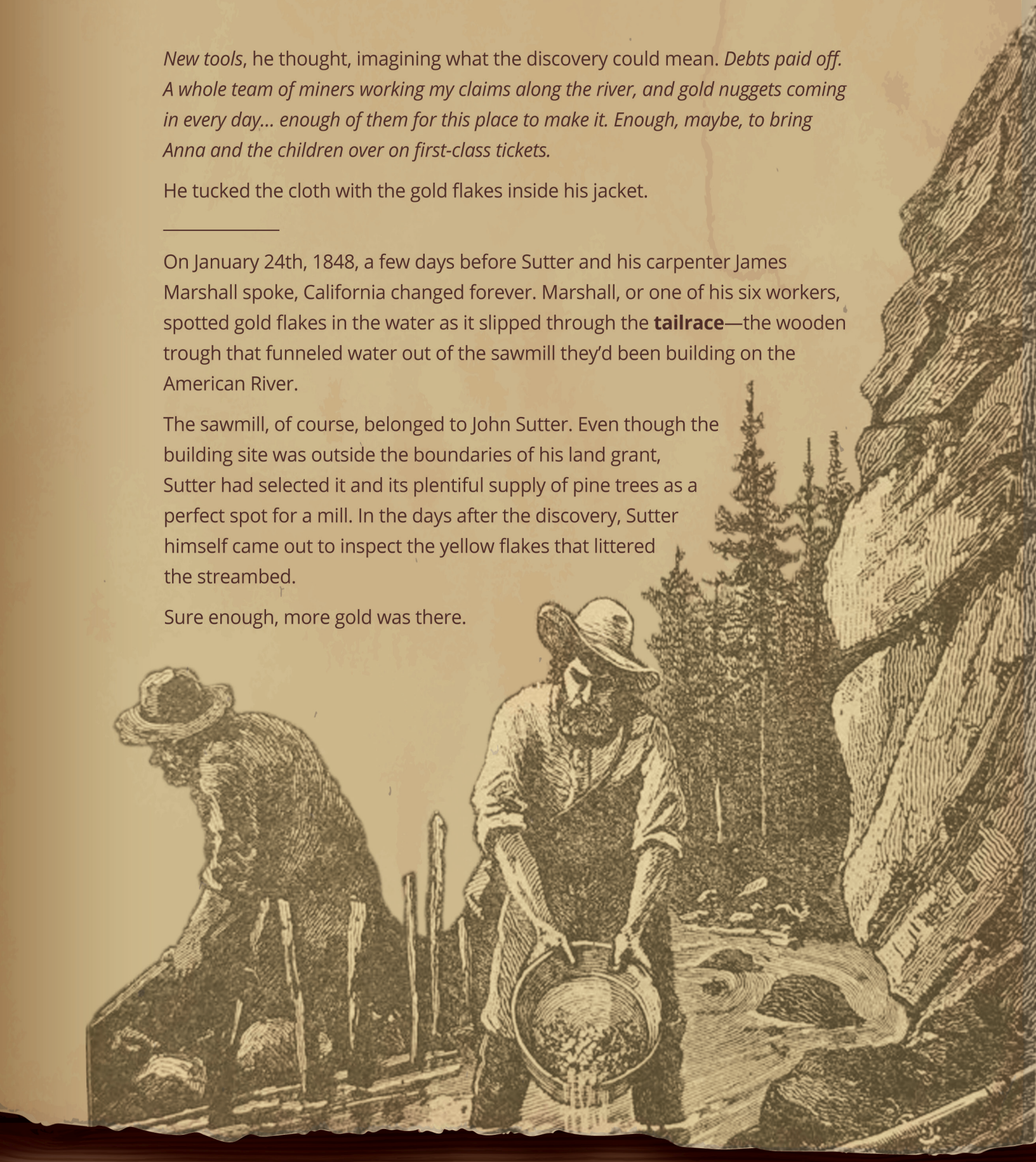
New tools, he thought, imagining what the discovery could mean. *Debts paid off. A whole team of miners working my claims along the river, and gold nuggets coming in every day... enough of them for this place to make it. Enough, maybe, to bring Anna and the children over on first-class tickets.*

He tucked the cloth with the gold flakes inside his jacket.

On January 24th, 1848, a few days before Sutter and his carpenter James Marshall spoke, California changed forever. Marshall, or one of his six workers, spotted gold flakes in the water as it slipped through the **tailrace**—the wooden trough that funneled water out of the sawmill they'd been building on the American River.

The sawmill, of course, belonged to John Sutter. Even though the building site was outside the boundaries of his land grant, Sutter had selected it and its plentiful supply of pine trees as a perfect spot for a mill. In the days after the discovery, Sutter himself came out to inspect the yellow flakes that littered the streambed.

Sure enough, more gold was there.



Golden State Scramble

Sutter knew he didn't have a lot of time to take advantage of James Marshall's golden discovery. He wanted to get a headstart on mining, but Sutter was unable to secure legal rights for a **land claim** around the area where gold had been spotted. Sure enough, rumors of gold in California began spreading like wildfire, and Sutter would have to scramble like anyone else to secure places to search for fortune.

But Sutter's misfortune was everyone else's opportunity. When evidence of the gold discovery reached San Francisco, the news kicked off one of the world's fastest **mass migrations**. Gold-hungry Americans from all over and immigrants from as far away as Europe and China quit their jobs and bid their families goodbye. In less than a decade, the Gold Rush transformed the region completely. Towns like San Francisco, and later Sacramento, quickly grew into cities, and the "Golden State" of California was now squarely on America's map.

The migration also created the need for new technology. Innovations in mining, railroad construction, and communication boomed. In the following decades, businessmen, oilmen, farmers, and even entertainers were all coming out. Word of the **Central Valley**'s rich, fertile soil and cheap land all the way south to Los Angeles brought more waves of people. All this growth and innovation would brand California as a place where those with grit and hustle could get a fresh start... and perhaps make a fortune.

GOLD RUSH FACTS

AS MUCH AS
750,000
POUNDS OF GOLD
came out of California from 1849 to 1857. Judging by today's gold price of $2,500 an ounce, the estimated worth of all that gold would be well over a *trillion dollars*.

During the Gold Rush, Yerba Buena became a chaotic
BOOM TOWN
called "San Francisco." A man named
WASHINGTON ALLON BARTLETT,
appointed by Mexico as a regional magistrate, renamed the city in
1847.

In 1849 alone, around
40,000 travelers
made their way to California by ship. So many prospectors came out in 1849 that they earned the nickname
"Forty-Niners."

AROUND
300,000
people came to California during the Gold Rush. Around 98 percent of those who came out were men.

CALIFORNIA WAS NOT A SLAVE STATE, and it sided with the northern "Union" states during the Civil War. Despite being across the country from the conflict, California's gold fields played a huge role. Shipments of gold to the East Coast helped to control inflation and finance the Union government's war effort against the South.

THE INFLUX OF NEW ARRIVALS RAISED SAN FRANCISCO'S POPULATION FROM
800
PEOPLE TO OVER
20,000
IN LESS THAN
TWO YEARS.

Many ships that arrived in San Francisco were abandoned. Residents took to sinking them or taking them apart and using the wood as building materials. To this day, **excavations** in San Francisco reveal parts of old ships built over and forgotten during the city's fast expansion.



LIFE OF A FORTY NINER

Living quarters

- Prospectors could be living outdoors by themselves or in a camp with others.
- Cloth tent, staked into the ground close to a river.
- Simple bedrolls or blankets stuffed with springy pine boughs.

Clothing

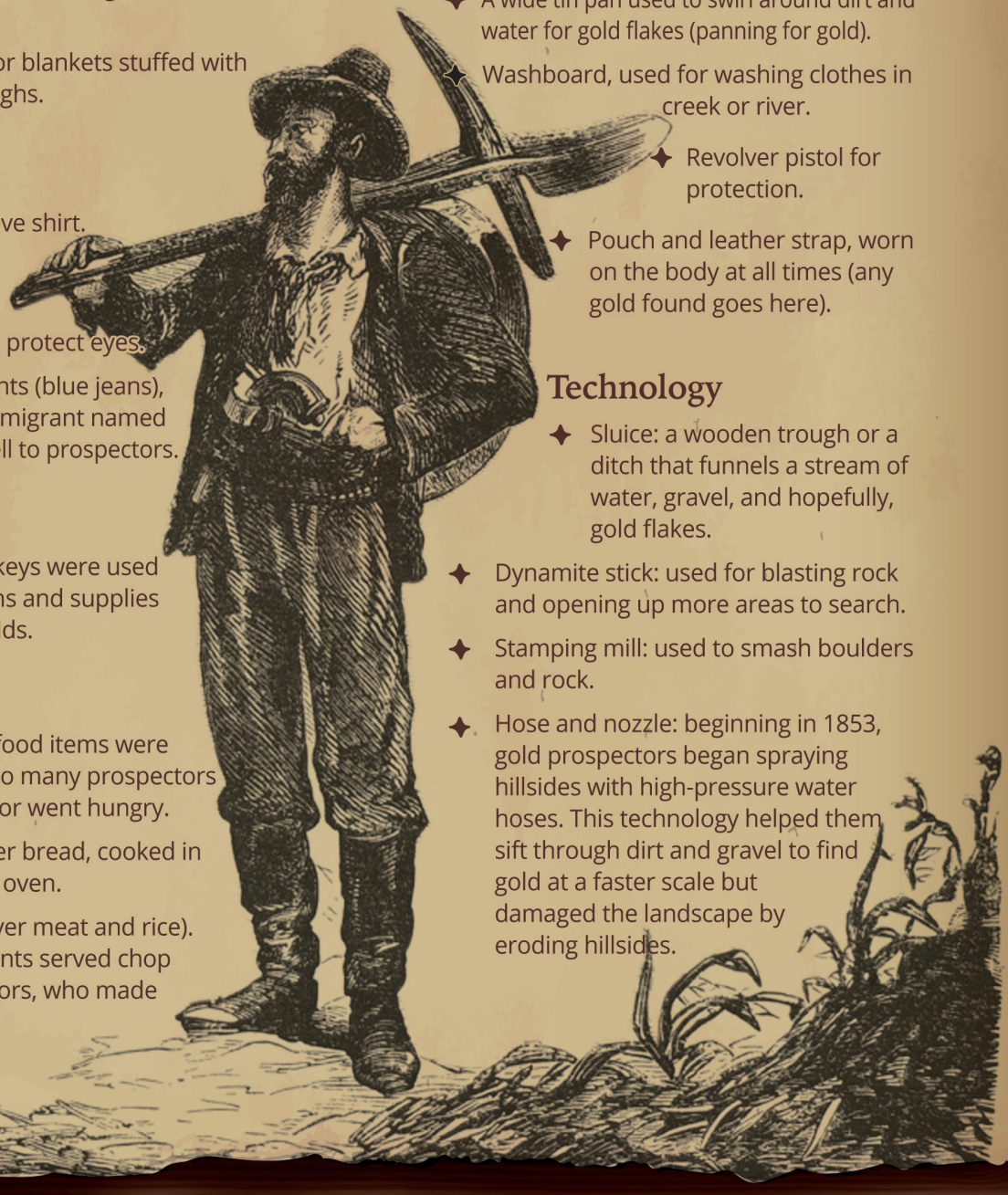
- Cotton, long-sleeve shirt.
- Leather boots and wool socks.
- Wide brim hat to protect eyes.
- Tough denim pants (blue jeans), created by an immigrant named Levi Strauss to sell to prospectors.

Animals

- Horses and donkeys were used to transport items and supplies over the gold fields.

Food

- Not great. Basic food items were very expensive, so many prospectors hunted, fished... or went hungry.
- Sourdough starter bread, cooked in a pan or a Dutch oven.
- Chop suey (leftover meat and rice). Chinese immigrants served chop suey to prospectors, who made it popular.



Tools

- Pick, shovel, axe.
- Trowel, wheelbarrow.
- A wide tin pan used to swirl around dirt and water for gold flakes (panning for gold).
- Washboard, used for washing clothes in creek or river.
- Revolver pistol for protection.
- Pouch and leather strap, worn on the body at all times (any gold found goes here).

Technology

- Sluice: a wooden trough or a ditch that funnels a stream of water, gravel, and hopefully, gold flakes.
- Dynamite stick: used for blasting rock and opening up more areas to search.
- Stamping mill: used to smash boulders and rock.
- Hose and nozzle: beginning in 1853, gold prospectors began spraying hillsides with high-pressure water hoses. This technology helped them sift through dirt and gravel to find gold at a faster scale but damaged the landscape by eroding hillsides.

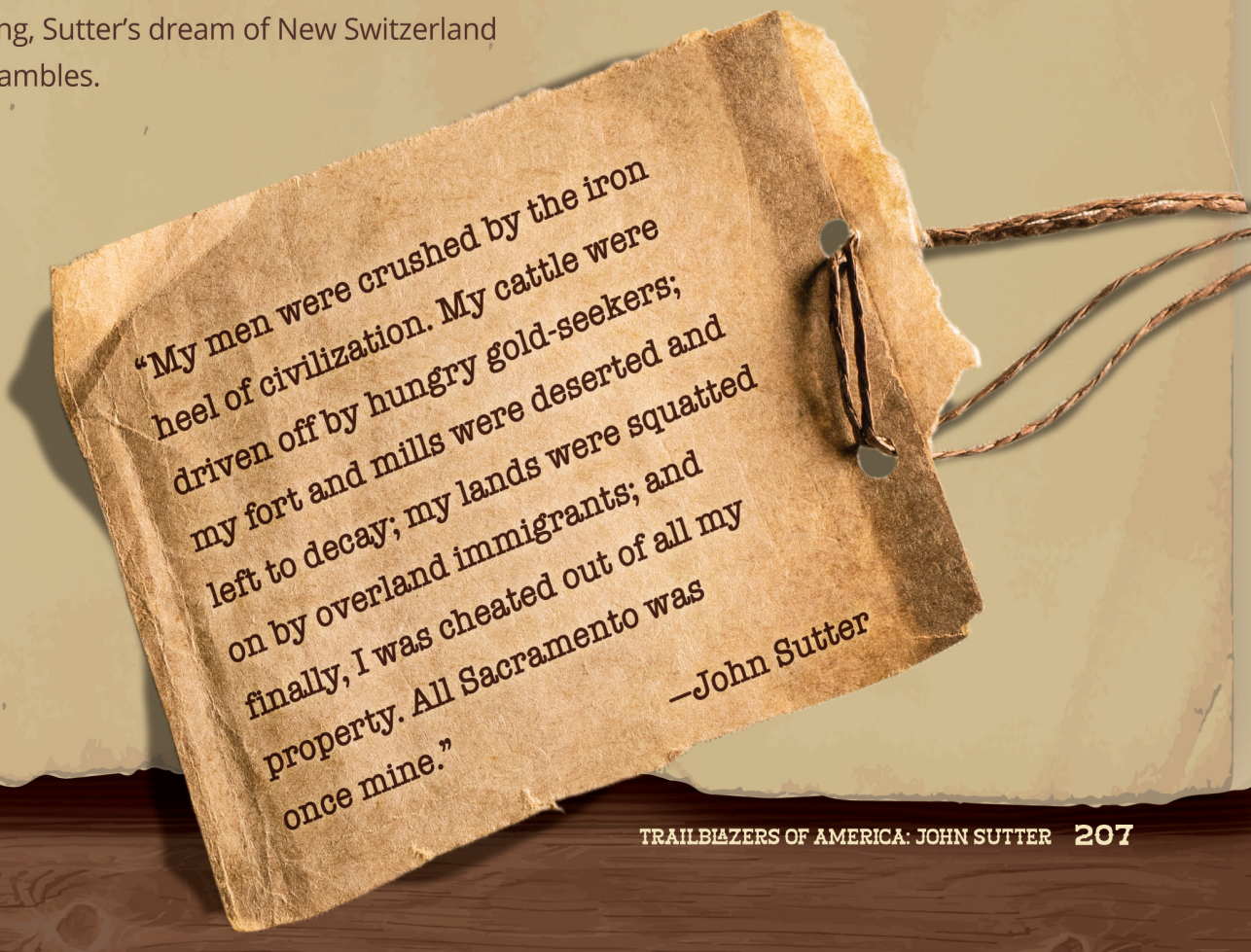
Crash and Burn

Gold spread the California dream far and wide, but for most people, the vision of easy riches proved to be a mirage. The mass migration to California caused prices for food, tools, and clothing to rise. Among those who found gold, few found enough of it to become rich... or even pay for their day-to-day supplies.

Instead, those who seized opportunities to sell goods and services to prospectors saw their fortunes rise. With small communities sprouting into towns and cities, many who bought land, grew food, or started a business instead of looking for gold fared very well. California's first millionaire was a man named Sam Brannan, a merchant who sold tin pans, pickaxes, and mining gear to prospectors at Sutter's Fort.

In the midst of all these changes, "Captain John Sutter" fell into misfortune. Soon, the workers he'd been paying to tend livestock and maintain the fort left to search for gold. Cattle and other animals went missing—likely stolen. Worst of all, he was no longer able to keep people off his land or go and claim any piece of land he wanted. Again, and worse than before, the debts piled up.

Before long, Sutter's dream of New Switzerland was in shambles.



The Bitter End

Sutter's Fort, February 1849

Before he left, John looked around.

What a shabby sight. The walls looked moth-eaten. Here and there, the limewash coat had torn away, revealing the crumbling bricks. Aside from a card game going on in the tannery, all the shops were vacant. Doors were flopped open, some hanging on one hinge like torn clothing. Tumbleweeds and broken bottles littered the ground.

John sighed. A year ago, the fort had been a hopping place full of people and activity. Farmers, merchants, and **vaqueros** passed through with herds of cattle. *How had it come to this?* The men playing cards were cackling like hyenas.

At the top of the wooden stairs, John glanced over the fort's walls. Out ahead of him, the weeds were chest-high. Fences that once held cows were crooked and broken. It wasn't evening yet, but **squatter's** campfires already dotted the horizon.

John shook his head.



Outside the fort, his horses were harnessed, and the wagon was waiting for him. Some forty-three miles to the north, near a town that is now called Yuba City, his workers were getting **Hock Farm** ready. As of yesterday, the sale of the fort and surrounding land for $7,000 was legal and binding.

"Ready?" John's oldest son, nicknamed "August," asked.

John nodded. August reached a hand down and helped him onto the wagon. With the horses clopping and the wagon bobbling away, John thought about the future. Arrangements for Anna and his other children to join them on Hock Farm were already in place.

At last, John thought, smiling through the sadness. Though it was not how he pictured it, he could not wait to see them again, to show them California's rivers, mountains, and growing cities. *When they get here*, he decided, *it will be paradise... and the adventure will start all over again.*



Writing Task

John Sutter was an entrepreneur who built Sutter's Fort and helped develop the area. Write a story about a business or project you would create if you were in his shoes.

How would your idea help people, and what challenges might you face?



More Misfortune

Like his dream of a colony, John Sutter's final paradise did not last. Life with his family on Hock Farm was pleasant for a time. To compensate for all his losses, and for his role in the state's history, California's government awarded him a small monthly **pension**. But tragedy struck again in 1865 when an angry neighbor burned Sutter's house down.

In one more adventure, Sutter and his family moved to Pennsylvania. There, Sutter made trips to Washington, D.C., to ask the U.S. government for compensation. He kept trying but was unsuccessful. Poor but famous, a seventy-seven-year-old John Sutter died on June 18, 1880 in the Mades Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Still Standing

Sutter's legacy is stamped on Sacramento—quite literally. His son, John Augustus Sutter Jr., helped found California's capital city in 1848.

Part of his fort, less than two miles from Sacramento's Capitol building, is also standing. The walls are new, but the central, two-story building is the original. Today, Sutter's Fort is a preserved historical site, perfect for dropping visitors right into California's Gold Rush-era history. As a symbol of the risk and ambition that made wild California a place to come and live, the fort is a gem.

Despite his shortcomings, historians remember John Sutter for his ambition and hospitality. His ability to follow through on a vision while finding practical ways to meet people's needs is a shining light for those with hustle. Like Sutter, one determined immigrant after another would come to America, especially California, with the determination to make a better life.

Today, California is much easier to get to than in Sutter's time, and the state with the world's fifth-largest economy owes much to him. His spirit of risk and adventure lives on in tech entrepreneurs, the entertainment industry, aerospace engineers, and countless small businesses that call California home. Sutter's greatest quality, **perseverance**, is a lesson for all time—an example for anyone itching to follow their dreams.

Glossary

Alta California: The northernmost province of Mexico during the early 19th century. Alta, or "Upper" California, included parts of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming.

Bear Flag Revolt: A settler rebellion in northern California during the Mexican-American War that led to the creation of the Bear Flag Republic, or the Republic of California, as an independent nation in 1846. The name came from their flag, which featured a bear facing a lone star. The republic only kept its independence for 25 days before being claimed by the United States.

California Delta: A low-lying land formation where California's Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers feed into the San Francisco Bay and eventually the Pacific Ocean.

California Gold Rush: A mass migration of settlers moving west to California to find gold. The migration began when gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill on the American River in 1848 and peaked in the early 1850s.

Californios: Spanish for "California resident." "Californio" was the name for Spanish-speaking people who lived in the territory when it was part of Mexico.

Cape Horn: A rocky formation on Hornos Island, Chile. Cape Horn is near the southern tip of South America, a landmark for those making the rough, dangerous voyage around the continent and up to North America.

Carpentry: The skill of building and repairing wooden structures. Carpenters use tools to shape, cut, and join wood into everyday items like furniture or frames for houses.

Central Valley: A large, flat region that runs north and south through the middle of California. The Central Valley is known for its fertile soil and for being one of the most productive farming regions in the world.

Charisma: Special charm or appeal that makes people like someone.

Chow: Slang for "food," or a hearty meal.

Confluence: The place where two rivers meet and flow together.

Courting: Trying to win someone's affection in a formal, romantic way.

Creditor: A person or company that lends money and expects to be paid back.

Custom House: A building where taxes are collected on goods coming into a country. The Monterey Custom House was built in 1827, and it functioned as an outpost for the United States government from 1846 to 1868.

Donner Party: A group of pioneers who got stuck in the snow during the winter of 1846 to 1847 while traveling from the Midwest to California. The Donner Party faced horrific hardships.

Excavations: The process of digging up and exploring ancient sites to find old objects or buildings.

Forty-Niners: The nickname given to people who rushed to California during the Gold Rush, hoping to strike it rich by finding gold. The term refers to the year 1849, which saw a dramatic increase in new arrivals.

Great Basin: A 200,000-square-mile area in North America that includes most of Nevada, half of Utah, and sections of Idaho, Wyoming, Oregon, and California. Water drains internally and has no outlet to the ocean or Gulf of Mexico. The water evaporates, absorbs, or goes into nearby lakes. The region's climate is usually hot and dry.

Gringo: A Spanish word often used to describe a foreigner, especially someone from the United States.

Glossary

Haberdashery: A store that sells men's clothing and accessories, like hats and ties.

Hock Farm: John Sutter's farm near Yuba City, California. After selling his fort in 1849, Sutter moved to Hock Farm with his family, where he grew crops and raised animals.

Isthmus: A narrow strip of land connecting two larger land areas, often with water on either side.

Land Claim: A legal declaration stating that a person owns a piece of land. In frontier history, settlers often made land claims by simply settling in new territory.

Limewash: Paint made from lime and water. In the 19th century, limewash was cheap to make and used to coat the outside walls of buildings to protect them from the weather.

Launch Boat: A small boat used to move from a ship to the shore or for shorter trips.

Magistrate: A local official who has some judicial powers, such as hearing minor cases or overseeing the law in a small community. A magistrate might handle small disputes or minor crimes.

Mass Migration: A large movement of people from one place or region to another. Mass Migrations are often caused by war, natural disasters, or economic factors.

New World: The name used by Europeans for North and South America after they were discovered in the late 15th century.

Oregon Trail: A 2,170-mile route that connected the Missouri River to the Oregon Territory. It was one of two main east-west wagon routes that settlers traveled during the 1840s-1860s.

Pension: A regular payment made to support someone during their retirement.

Perseverance: Continuing to work hard and not give up, even when things are difficult.

Sawmill: A place where logs are cut into boards and planks. In the mid-1800s, many sawmills, including Sutter's, were powered by flowing water.

Schooner: A popular sailing ship with two or more masts. Schooners were invented in the 17th century but were used to carry people and cargo throughout the 19th century.

Squatters: People who settle on land without legal permission or ownership. During frontier times, squatters remained on land they didn't legally own in hopes of eventually gaining ownership.

Tailrace: A channel that carries water away from a mill or a water wheel after it has been used to turn the machinery. The tailrace was an important part of the water system that powered mills like Sutter's.

Tenacity: Determination; not giving up easily.

Utopian: Modeled after an idea of a perfect (or near-perfect) human society.

Vaquero: Spanish for "cowboy." Before California became a state, cattle drivers and ranch hands were called "vaqueros."

Sources

Alexander, Kathy. "James Marshall | Discovering Gold in California." *Legends of America*, January 2023, www.legendsofamerica.com/ca-jamesmarshall. Accessed 3 August 2024.

Alexander, Kathy. "John A. Sutter | Boom and Bust in California." *Legends of America*, September 2022, www.legendsofamerica.com/ca-johnsutter. Accessed 30 July 2024.

"Bear Flag Revolt." *Golden Gate National Recreation Area (U.S. National Park Service)*. https://www.nps.gov/articles/bearflag.htm. Accessed 6 August 2024.

"California Gold Rush." *Britannica Kids*, 2024, kids.britannica.com/students/article/California-Gold-Rush. Accessed 3 August 2024.

"California's Role in the Civil War." *Golden Gate National Recreation Area (U.S. National Park Service)*. www.nps.gov/goga/learn/historyculture/california-in-civil-war.htm. Accessed 6 August 2024.

Engstrom, Iris, and Ken Owens. *John Sutter: Sutter's Fort and the California Gold Rush.* The Library of American Lives and Times Book Series. www.archive.org, 2004, archive.org/details/johnsuttersutter0000engs. Accessed 28 July 2024.

Highsmith, Carol M. "The tailrace, or structure conveying water away from a mill..." The Jon B. Lovelace Collection of California Photographs in Carol M. Highsmith's America Project, *Library of Congress*, 2012, www.loc.gov/resource/highsm.23829/?r=-0.24,-0.194,1.112,0.742,0. Accessed 3 August 2024.

Hurtado, Albert. *John Sutter: A Life on the North American Frontier*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2006. Accessed 19 August 2024.

"John Sutter | Role in Gold Rush, Sutter's Mill, and Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14 June 2024, www.britannica.com/biography/John-Sutter. Accessed 1 July 2024.

McNamara, Robert. "Biography of John Sutter, Owner of Where California Gold Rush Began." *ThoughtCo*, 15 May 2019, www.thoughtco.com/john-sutter-launched-california-gold-rush-1773626. Accessed 1 July 2024.

"The Name and the Geography | Early California History: An Overview." *Library of Congress*, www.loc.gov/collections/california-first-person-narratives/articles-and-essays/early-california-history/name-and-geography. Accessed 28 July 2024.

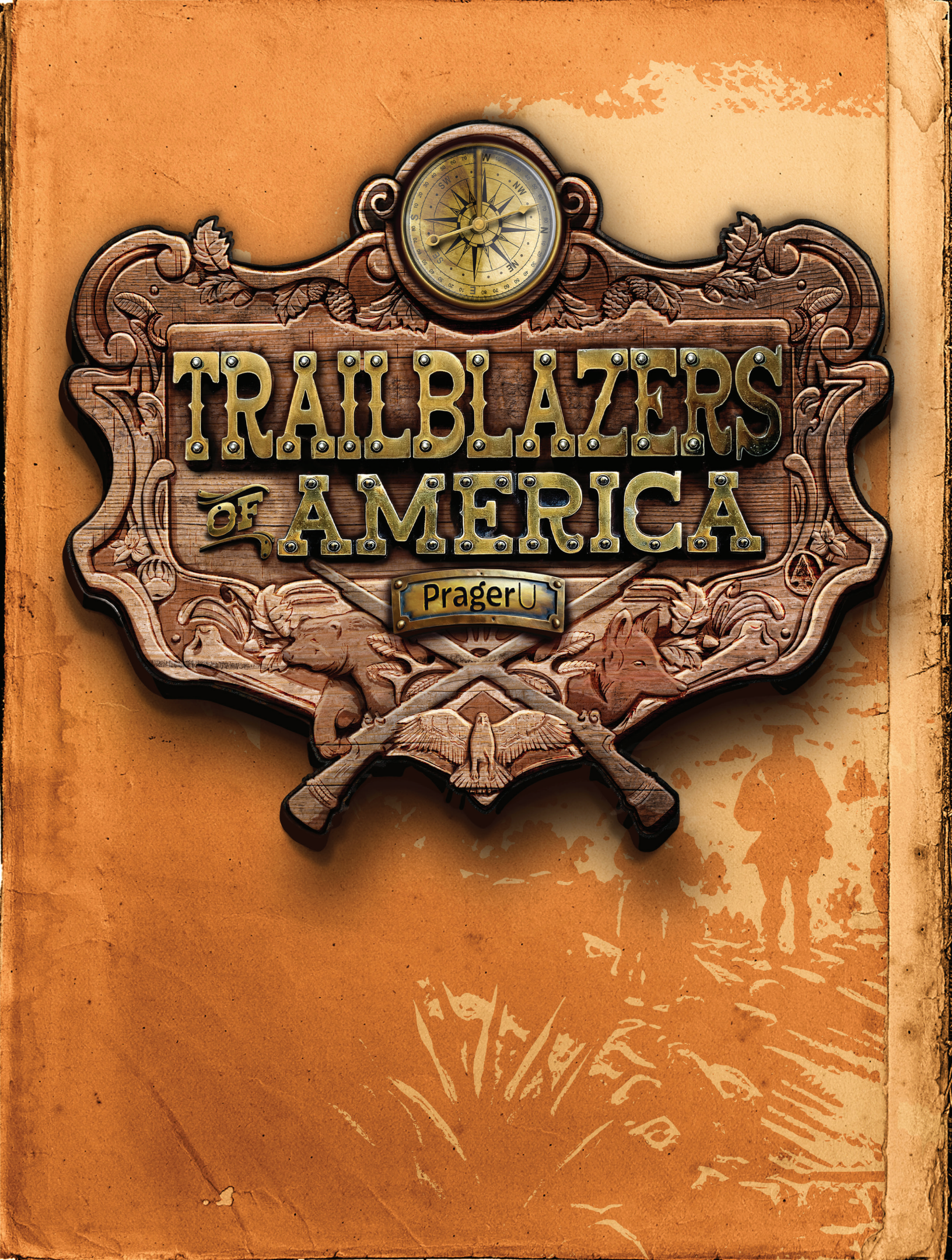
Nubie, Steven. "A Day in the Life of a California 49er." *Gold Prospectors Association of America*, 28 March 2020, www.goldprospectors.org/News/ArtMID/406/ArticleID/789/A-Day-in-the-Life-of-a-California-49er. Accessed 3 August 2024.

"Spanish California | Early California History: An Overview." *The Library of Congress*, www.loc.gov/collections/california-first-person-narratives/articles-and-essays/early-california-history/spanish-california. Accessed 25 July 2024.

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, and California State Parks. "Sutter's Fort Through Time—Virtual Field Trip." *YouTube*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0iV0fRiTks. Accessed 8 August 2024.

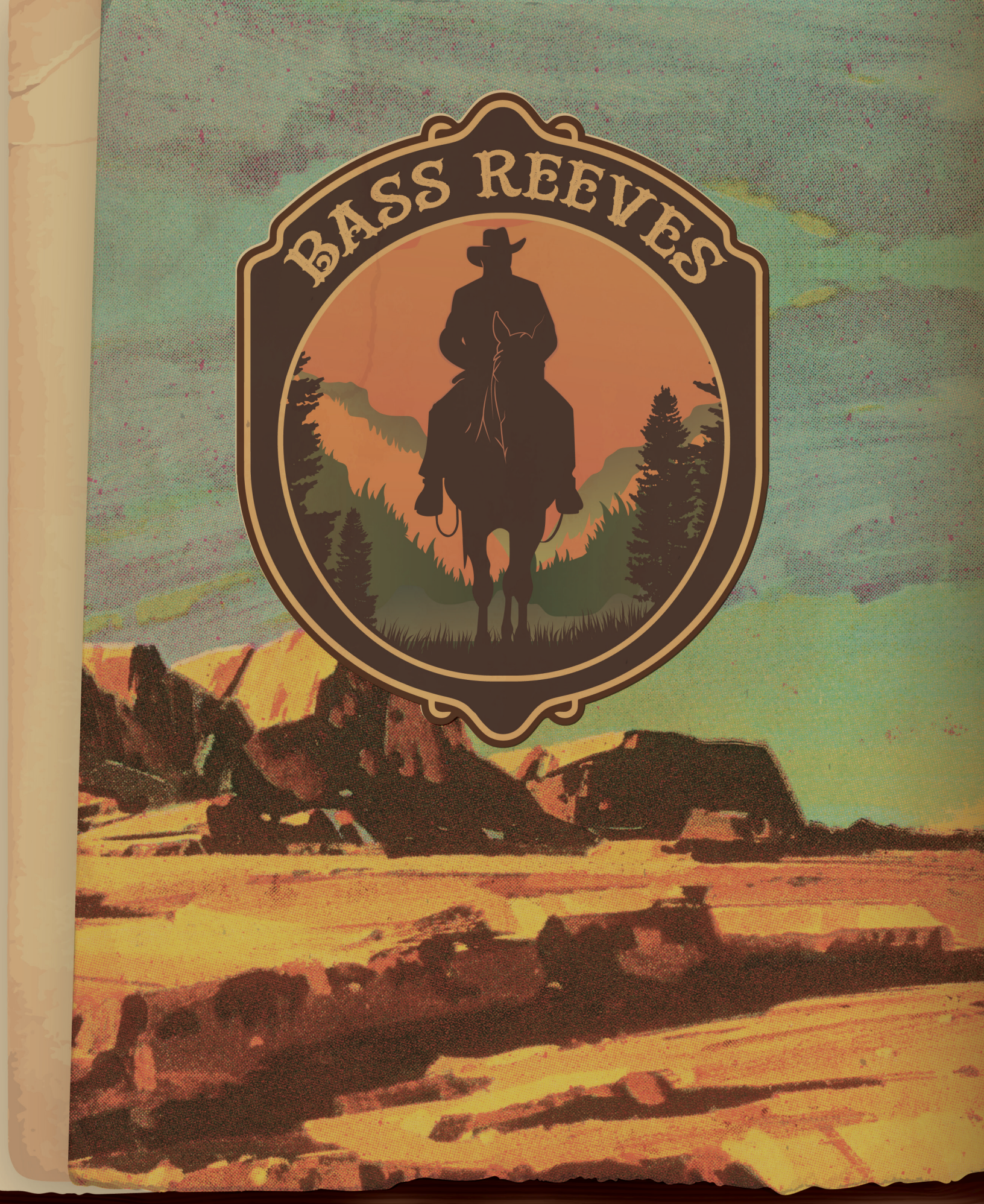
Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, and California State Parks. "The Sutter Gun." *YouTube*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItcQXiPNWF4. Accessed 8 August 2024.

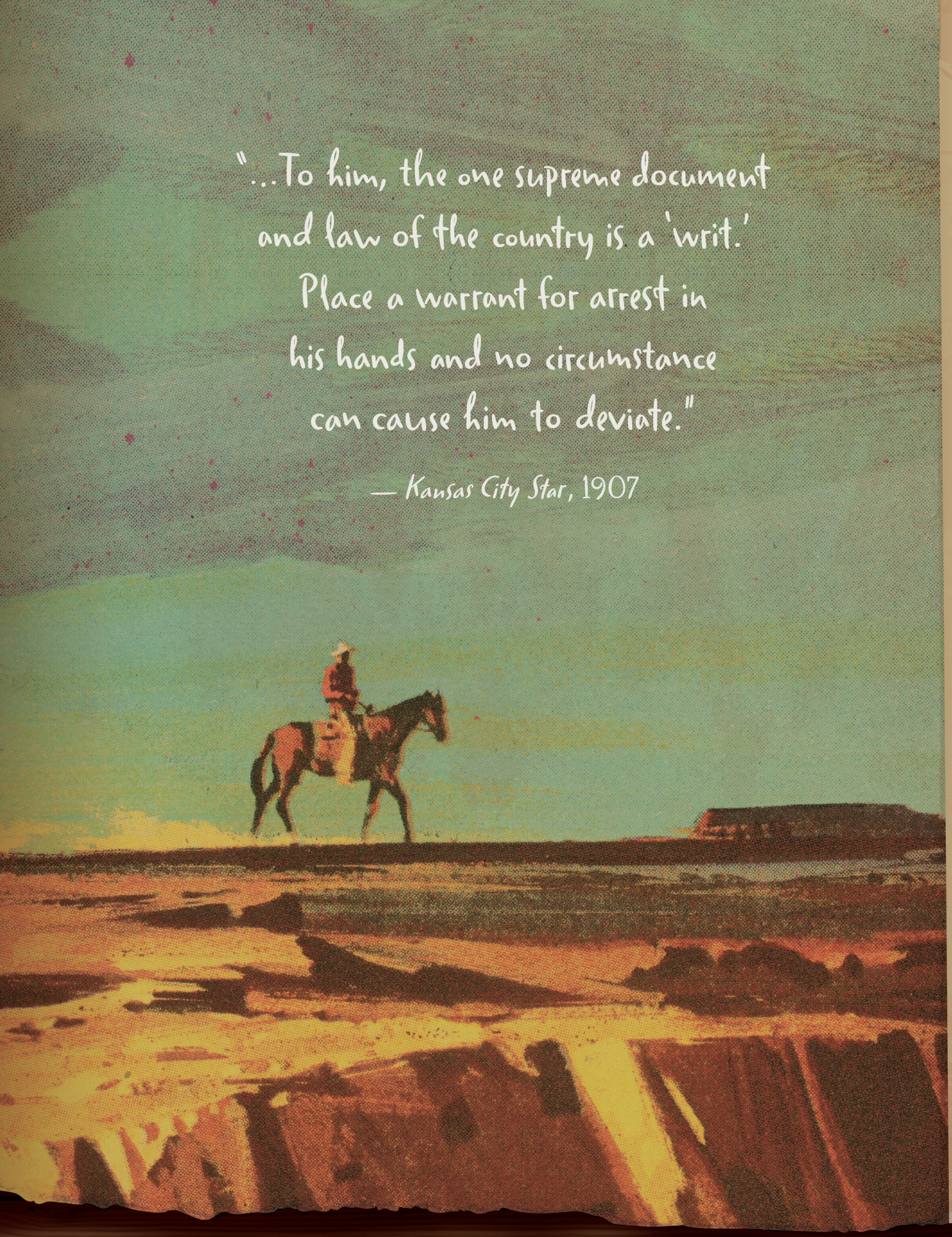
Vaziri, Aidan. "California Retains Standing as World's 5th Largest Economy." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 April 2024, www.sfchronicle.com/california/article/california-retains-standing-world-s-5th-largest-19406905.php. Accessed 8 August 2024.


TRAILBLAZERS
OF AMERICA
PragerU

BASS REEVES




BASS REEVES


"...To him, the one supreme document
and law of the country is a 'writ.'
Place a warrant for arrest in
his hands and no circumstance
can cause him to deviate."
— Kansas City Star, 1907

Fugitive on the Run

Arkansas, during the American Civil War, 1862

Bass held his cards close to his chest. He had a good hand, probably a winning hand, but he wasn't sure if he should play or fold.

Ultimately, winning or losing at cards didn't matter much for Bass. He was a slave, and no matter the outcome of the card game, he'd soon be forced to the battlefields of war.

His master, George, sat across the table from Bass and watched him closely. If Bass folded his cards and let his master win, he knew tomorrow's trip to rejoin the **Confederate Army** would be more pleasant. However, any chance for a slave to beat his master was just too good to pass up.

"That's enough thinking," George said. "Let's see 'em."

Bass calmly and confidently played his hand. The sight of the fifth spade hitting the table sent George into a coughing fit. When George raised his arm to cover his mouth, Bass caught a glimpse of something in his sleeve. In a flash, Bass was around the table and grabbed his master at the wrist.

"Careful now, Bass," George warned.

"Cheater," Bass growled.

"Get your hands off me and remember your place!" George snapped, pushing him away.

Both men stood, the card game forgotten. Tension was thick in the air, but Bass didn't move an inch or avert his eyes.

With lightning speed, George grabbed a glass from the table and hurled it at his slave. Bass instinctively ducked—and in one fluid motion, he grabbed the card-cheat, picked him off the ground, and slammed his master down on the game table.

George's head hit the wood with a loud crack, and blood began trickling down his neck. He weakly tried scratching Bass's face as his body went limp.

Bass wiped a few beads of sweat from his forehead and looked down at his master lying unconscious. He knew this was it. The time was now or never.

The slave raced for the door and didn't look back. Bass ran as fast as his long legs would carry him. Freedom was out there, and he knew where to find it. In true American fashion, he went west.

Meet the Legendary Lawman: Bass Reeves

Bass Reeves was born a slave in Arkansas sometime in July of 1838. He was owned by the William Reeves household and grew to stand six feet and two inches. In his youth, Bass was said to be clever, well-mannered, and good-humored. He was very important to the Reeves family. When they moved to Texas, he was brought along, and in another sign of his value, Bass was not allowed to learn to read.

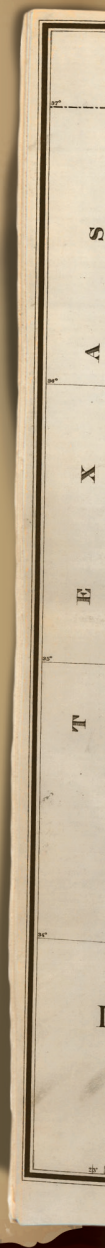
Slaveholders regularly took great efforts in order to keep their slaves from learning to read. They understood the power of education. Because reading allows ideas and information to spread, it was feared by some slaveholders even more than actual weapons. The Reeves family proved this because they trusted Bass with guns.

Bass learned to shoot early in life, and his quick reflexes and steady aim made him not just a good shot, but a fast shot too. As a teen, he was so good at turkey shooting contests his opponents stopped showing up to compete.

After decades of growing tension over the issue of slavery, America erupted into Civil War in April of 1861. George Reeves, a son of William, joined the **Confederacy** as a colonel and brought Bass along as his **body servant**.

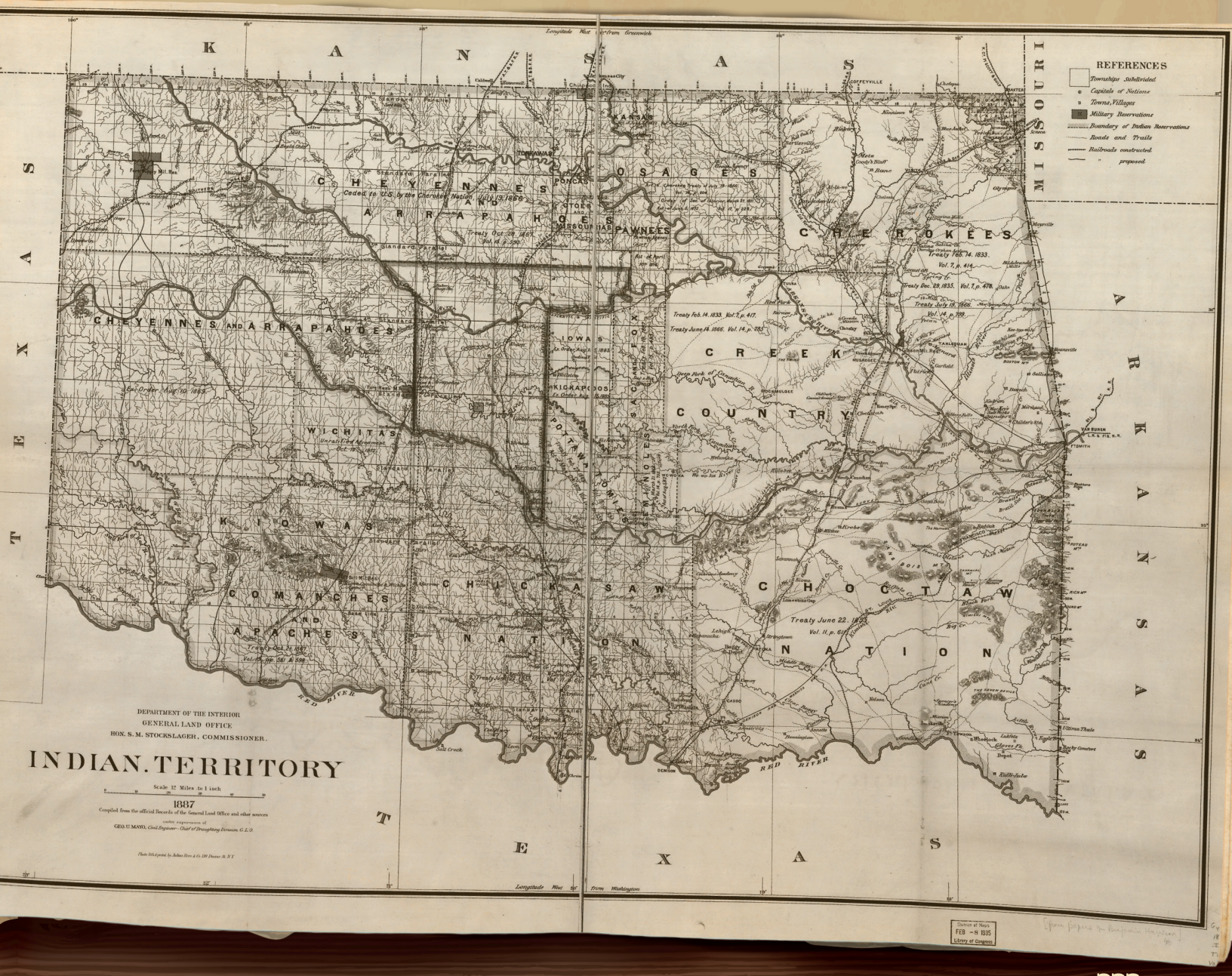
Despite his lack of education, Bass knew that life as a free man was his destiny, and even though he didn't have a choice, how could he help those fighting to keep him enslaved? While traveling with Colonel Reeves, Bass found an opportunity to escape, and he didn't hesitate.

Legend has it, a dispute over a card game led to Bass's escape from his master, but whatever the details, he was a runaway slave. If caught, he would face severe punishment, but he knew just the place to avoid capture.



Bass made his way west to the **Indian Territory** beyond the reach of American laws. The lands of modern Oklahoma were then home of the **Five Civilized Tribes**—the Cherokee, Seminole, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw—and they governed the area without involvement from the United States.

Though Bass's movement and activities during his time in the Indian Territory are mostly unknown, he learned the land and gained knowledge of Native languages and customs. It was an easy place to blend in, particularly *because* it was lawless. It was the **Wild West**: a perfect hiding place for outlaws, bandits... and runaways like Bass.

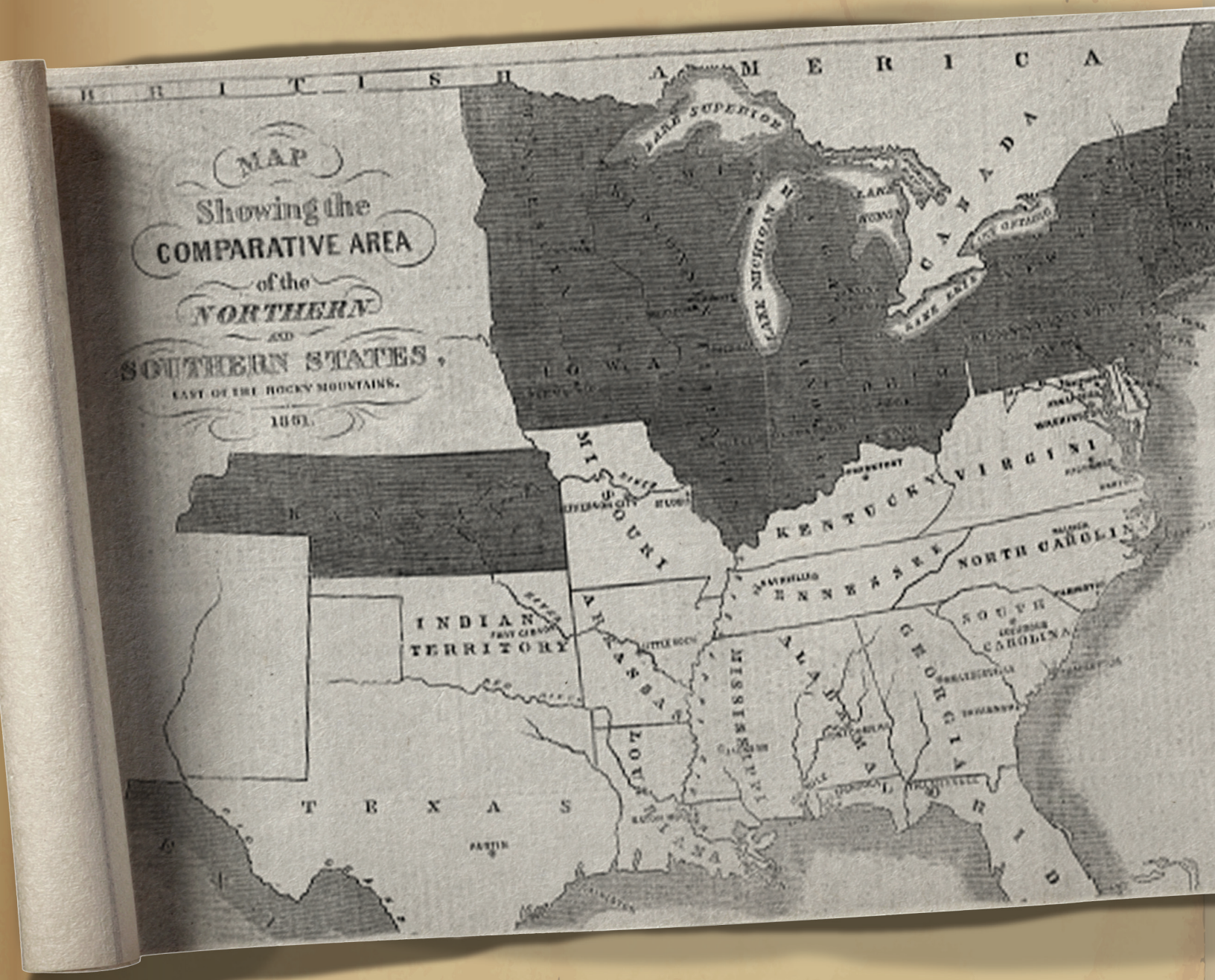


The Abolition of Slavery

Slavery in America began when it was allowed in each of Britain's colonies. Not long after winning independence and uniting as one country, America's Northern states quickly began outlawing slavery, but it remained in the South. As the country grew westward, when states were added, some entered "free" and others "slave," but the division remained geographic as well as **ideological**.

During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln initiated a legendary wave of freedom with his **Emancipation Proclamation**. The document freed all slaves in the rebelling Southern states, but in reality, the new measures were difficult to enforce in Confederate-held areas. Plus, Lincoln's proclamation did not end slavery in the border states (Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware) or in areas of the Confederacy already under **Union** control.

It wasn't until 1865 that real change came about. First, the Civil War ended with a Union victory. The reunited country then added the **13th Amendment** to the Constitution, which officially **abolished** slavery throughout the entire nation.



Rise to Deputy Marshal

With the ending of the Civil War, slavery was over, and Bass was no longer a fugitive. He settled not far from Indian Territory in Van Buren, Arkansas where he married his wife, Jennie. The two had a successful farm and had a family with eleven children.

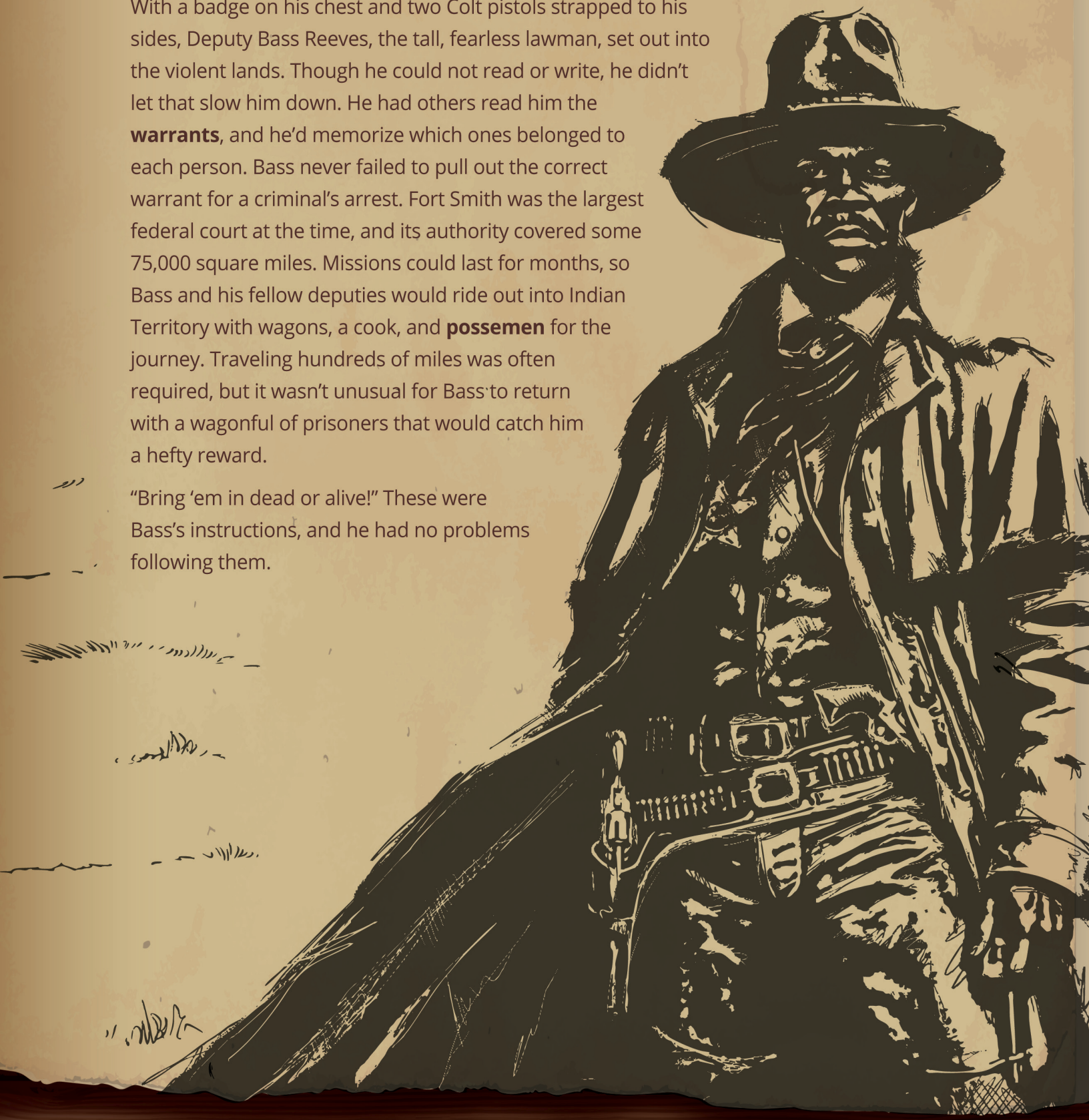
Bass was known to assist the deputy marshals at Fort Smith, Arkansas. Bass claimed to know the Indian Territory like "a cook knows her kitchen," and his help as a guide and interpreter was in high demand. Indian Territory's lawlessness had attracted waves of crime and violence to neighboring communities, and if the Five Tribes weren't going to bring order to the area, the U.S. government decided they would.

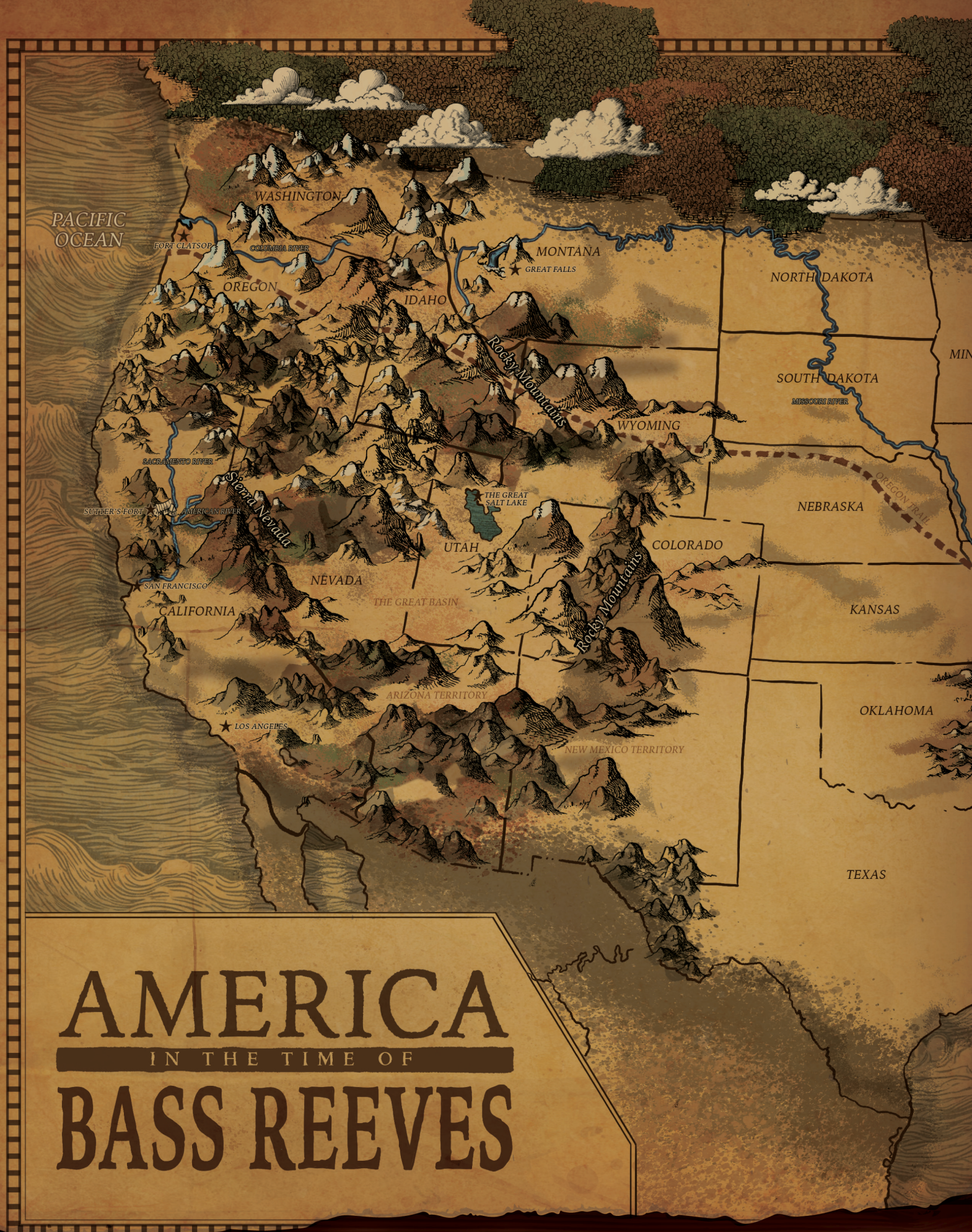
In 1875, Isaac Parker was appointed the first judge of Western Arkansas and the Indian Territory, and he immediately commissioned 200 deputies to clean it up. Murders, thefts, and other illegal activity were rampant. Bass was among the recruits, and he became one of the first black marshals in U.S. history.



With a badge on his chest and two Colt pistols strapped to his sides, Deputy Bass Reeves, the tall, fearless lawman, set out into the violent lands. Though he could not read or write, he didn't let that slow him down. He had others read him the **warrants**, and he'd memorize which ones belonged to each person. Bass never failed to pull out the correct warrant for a criminal's arrest. Fort Smith was the largest federal court at the time, and its authority covered some 75,000 square miles. Missions could last for months, so Bass and his fellow deputies would ride out into Indian Territory with wagons, a cook, and **possemen** for the journey. Traveling hundreds of miles was often required, but it wasn't unusual for Bass to return with a wagonful of prisoners that would catch him a hefty reward.

"Bring 'em in dead or alive!" These were Bass's instructions, and he had no problems following them.




PACIFIC OCEAN
WASHINGTON
FORT CLATSOP
COLUMBIA RIVER
OREGON
IDAHO
MONTANA
GREAT FALLS
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
MISSOURI RIVER
Rocky Mountains
WYOMING
SACRAMENTO RIVER
Sierra Nevada
SUTTER'S FORT
AMERICAN RIVER
THE GREAT SALT LAKE
UTAH
NEBRASKA
OREGON TRAIL
COLORADO
NEVADA
SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA
THE GREAT BASIN
Rocky Mountains
KANSAS
ARIZONA TERRITORY
OKLAHOMA
LOS ANGELES
NEW MEXICO TERRITORY
TEXAS
AMERICA
IN THE TIME OF
BASS REEVES


MAINE
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON
NEW YORK
RHODE ISLAND
NEW YORK CITY
CONNECTICUT
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
DETROIT
IOWA
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
CHICAGO
Appalachian Mountains
NEW JERSEY
PHILADELPHIA
OHIO
PENNSYLVANIA
INDIANA
DELAWARE
ILLINOIS
WEST VIRGINIA
D.C.
MISSOURI
MARYLAND
VIRGINIA
OHIO RIVER
ST. LOUIS
KENTUCKY
CUMBERLAND GAP
NORTH CAROLINA
TENNESSEE
Appalachian Mountains
ARKANSAS
SOUTH CAROLINA
FT. SMITH
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CHARLESTON
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
LOUISIANA
NEW ORLEANS
FLORIDA

Dangerous Duel: Webb vs. Reeves

Bywater's General Store, Indian Territory, 1884

Jim Webb saw the legendary deputy coming on his horse. His mind nervously raced as his options flashed before him. He'd already been arrested but escaped before his trial. No way he was going back.

The outlaw drew his gun, leaped from the open general store window, and began sprinting. *If he doesn't see me, I'll get my horse and be gone. Just 50 yards, that's all.*

But there was no escaping Bass Reeves. His eyes were as good as his shot, and after spotting Webb scampering across the road, he skillfully maneuvered his horse and blocked the outlaw's easy exit. Now exposed, Webb turned sharply and found cover behind a water trough. He listened for the sounds of Bass turning his horse and planned his next move. Jim had respect for Bass, but he was out of options: either he or Bass would walk out of this alive.

The outlaw sprang up from behind his cover, took aim, and shot. *BANG! BANG! BANG!*

***

Jim's first shot grazed Bass's saddle just as he completed turning his horse around. The second cut a button clean off his coat. The third tore through his horse's bridle, and the now-useless reigns fell to the dirt.

Bass reached for his rifle, jumped off his horse, and bolted behind a barrier.

BANG! A fourth bullet from Jim's gun whizzed past the edge of the barrier an inch from the brim of Bass's hat. Another close call. *Click*... Bass cocked his rifle and listened carefully. Not a sound from Webb.

"Sorry Jim, but you're not gettin' outta here," the lawman hollered to break the silence.

BANG! Another shot flew past Bass's barrier, and then suddenly, there were footsteps. Webb was making a run for it.

Bass calmly stepped into the street, quickly lifted his gun, and aimed. Jim was fast, and he was quickly fading into the distance. For most men, hitting a moving target from about 100 yards away (especially after nearly being shot yourself) would be tricky, but this was Bass Reeves. He released his breath and squeezed the trigger without a hint of worry.

BANG!

Jim Webb went down in a cloud of dust. "Reeves!" the outlaw called weakly.

Bass calmly approached the fallen man but kept his rifle aimed and ready. Though mortally wounded, Webb was still breathing, and his revolver remained in his hand.

"Jim, throw the gun away," Bass ordered.

The defeated criminal released the grip of his weapon and looked up at Bass.

Bass crouched down beside Webb, knowing his time alive was short.

"You're a brave man, Bass," Jim wheezed. "Take my gun and its sheath as a gift. I've killed eleven men with it, and I thought you would be the twelfth. I want to die knowing my gun will do some good. Please take it."

Bass didn't say a word, but he did retrieve the outlaw's gun and tucked it away. He let the man pass as peacefully as he could. He had hoped to bring Jim Webb back to face the justice of the courts, but Jim had chosen the justice of the Wild West instead.

Oh well, Bass thought, *at least the world is a little safer with one less bad man in it.*

"Reeves was never known to show the slightest excitement, under any circumstance. He does not know what fear is."

–Oklahoma City Weekly *Times-Journal*, 1907

A FIELD GUIDE TO

INDIAN TERRITORY & THE SOUTH PLAINS

ANIMALS



SKUNK

A small mammal around the size of a dog or cat that has black and white striped fur. It's known for its foul-smelling spray as a form of defense. Skunks live only in North and South America. A story goes that Bass once had a skunk crawl onto him while he was sleeping in Indian Territory. One of the prisoners he was escorting back to Fort Smith tried to make a lot of noise to scare the skunk into spraying Bass, but the lawman talked to the creature calmly, and it eventually walked off without bothering anyone.



CATTLE

Large, domesticated mammals usually found on farms as livestock. They're used for their ability to provide milk, meat, or leather. You probably know them as cows, but they come in many different breeds all with varying colors, body size, and horn length. Bass would have come across many cattle herds in the Indian Territory and Texas on farms and ranches. He also chased his fair share of cattle-thieving criminals!



HORSES

They were introduced to North America by Spain in the 1500s, but the Native Americans helped breed them. Horses played a key role in the development of the West. They were used for transportation, hunting, herding cattle, and pulling plows on farms. The West wouldn't have thrived as it did without them. Common breeds were the Palomino, Morgan, and Quarter Horse. Wild horses that popularly roamed the West were called Mustangs! Reeves famously caught and killed Tom Story, leader of a notorious horse-thieving gang.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

INDIAN TERRITORY & THE SOUTH PLAINS

PLANTS



PRAIRIE SUNFLOWER

A yellow sunflower native to the Great Plains of North America. It can grow three to six feet tall and enjoys a habitat of sandy prairies and plains.



PRICKLY PEAR

A type of flowering cactus native to the Americas, particularly Mexico and the western and south-central United States. The fruit and flowers of the plant are edible, and it grows in dry, desert-like conditions.



MESQUITE TREES

Common trees in dry climates such as the southwestern United States and down into South America. They can be short shrubs if they grow in shallow soil, or they can grow to be 50 feet tall in deep, rich soil. Their roots are known for growing very deep into the soil, searching for water. The trees grow pods, or beans, that can be ground into flour to make bread.

Wearing a Badge in the Wild West

Bass's time as a U.S. deputy marshal was full of exciting tales and close calls. As more federal courts opened in the West, he moved from station to station. He took positions in Paris, Texas; Wetumka, Oklahoma; and Muskogee, Oklahoma.

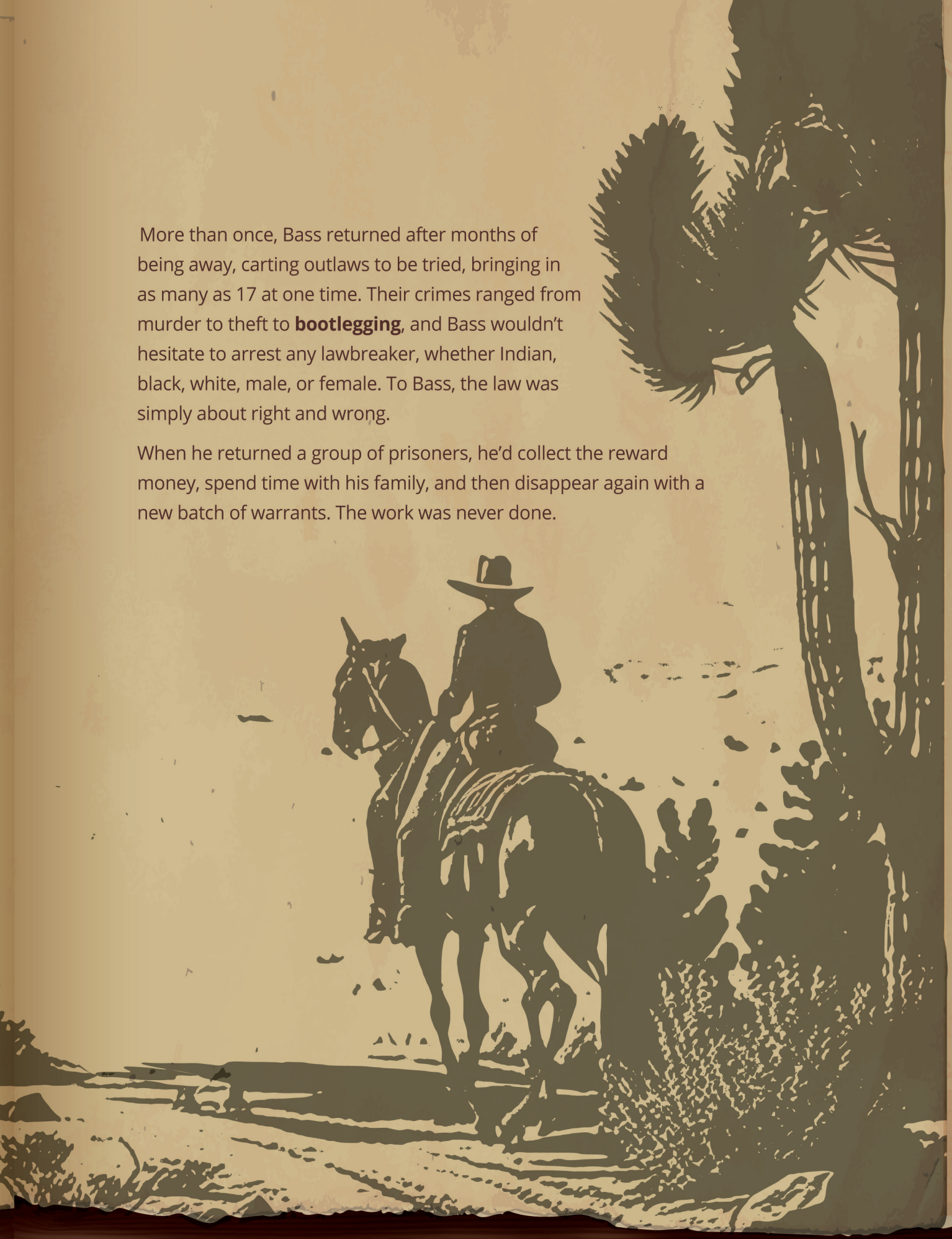
Bass wasn't just known for his shooting skills—he was a master of disguise as well. He would dress as a poor farmer or a fugitive on the run to get close to his suspects. One time, he pretended to be a fugitive to gain the trust of a suspected murderer. Bass traveled with the man for three months and was able to get a full confession. Later, Bass testified against the man at his trial.

Bass's reputation as a man of justice and integrity spread throughout his lifetime, earning him some fame during his career. A notable female criminal, Belle Starr, actually turned herself in as soon as she found out Reeves had a warrant for her arrest.

Most deputies knew they had a dangerous job, but Bass seemed to wear fearlessness alongside his badge. Just 80 miles west of Fort Smith ran the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad. It cut right through Indian Territory, and it was known as the "dead line." Outlaws would leave cards or notes, warning deputies that if they crossed those tracks, they'd be killed. Reeves never hesitated to travel past the "dead line" and was known to show off warning cards he had collected to bandits he captured beyond the tracks.

More than once, Bass returned after months of being away, carting outlaws to be tried, bringing in as many as 17 at one time. Their crimes ranged from murder to theft to **bootlegging**, and Bass wouldn't hesitate to arrest any lawbreaker, whether Indian, black, white, male, or female. To Bass, the law was simply about right and wrong.

When he returned a group of prisoners, he'd collect the reward money, spend time with his family, and then disappear again with a new batch of warrants. The work was never done.



NOTABLE ARRESTS

During Bass Reeves's career, it's estimated that he killed 14 outlaws and arrested over 3,000 men and women who broke federal laws in the western territories. That's an impressive track record for any deputy, but being one of the earliest black-American deputies makes it all the more notable.

Check out the following warrants to see some of Bass's most notable arrests from his career!

WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE

BELLE STARR

KNOWN ASSOCIATE OF THE STARR CLAN



REWARD: $500

CRIMES: Horse Thievery, Harboring Fugitives

Though Bass didn't arrest her, when Belle found out he had the warrant for her arrest, she turned herself in at Fort Smith. She was convicted but only served a short jail sentence due to good behavior.

WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE

BENNIE REEVES



REWARD: $600

CRIMES: Domestic Murder

Bass brought in his own son after finding out he killed his wife in a fit of jealousy. Bennie was convicted and sentenced to life in jail, but he got out later on good behavior. Reportedly, he lived the rest of his life as a model citizen.

WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE

GREENLEAF

A SEMINOLE INDIAN



REWARD: $900

CRIMES: Murder of 7 people.
He was known to kill the people he stole from.
Evaded capture and arrest for 18 years.

Bass found out where Greenleaf was staying, hearing that he was passing through with illegal whiskey. In the morning, before Greenleaf woke up, Bass and his men surrounded the house. People were so shocked by the arrest, that they came from all over to confirm he'd actually been arrested.

WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE

TOM STORY

LEADER OF THE TOM STORY GANG



REWARD: $600

CRIMES: Horse Thievery

Bass waited along his suspected route, and when Tom tried to fire on him, Bass beat him to it. With the death of Tom, the entire thieving gang broke apart and was never heard from again.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

INDIAN TERRITORY & THE SOUTH PLAINS

WEAPONRY & TECHNOLOGY

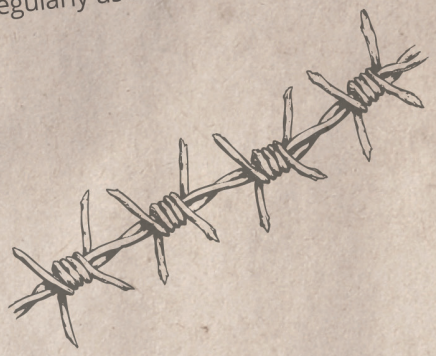


LANCE

A weapon used for hunting and combat that could be thrown from horseback. Some lances were over 12-feet long and could travel long distances. Even after rifles were regularly available, Indian tribes like the Comanche, Kiowa, Arapahoe, and Cheyenne regularly used lances.

BARBED WIRE

Affordable, effective, and environmentally friendly, barbed wire was a major tool used to tame the American West. Invented and promoted during the last half of the 19th century, barbed wire marked land rights, protected agriculture, and controlled livestock.





MARSHAL'S BADGE

A metal star or circle with a star inside it that marshals wore to designate their position. There were many different styles over the years, and in the 1800s, some would cut it out of a coin or metal tin themselves if they didn't have the budget to buy one.



HANDCUFFS

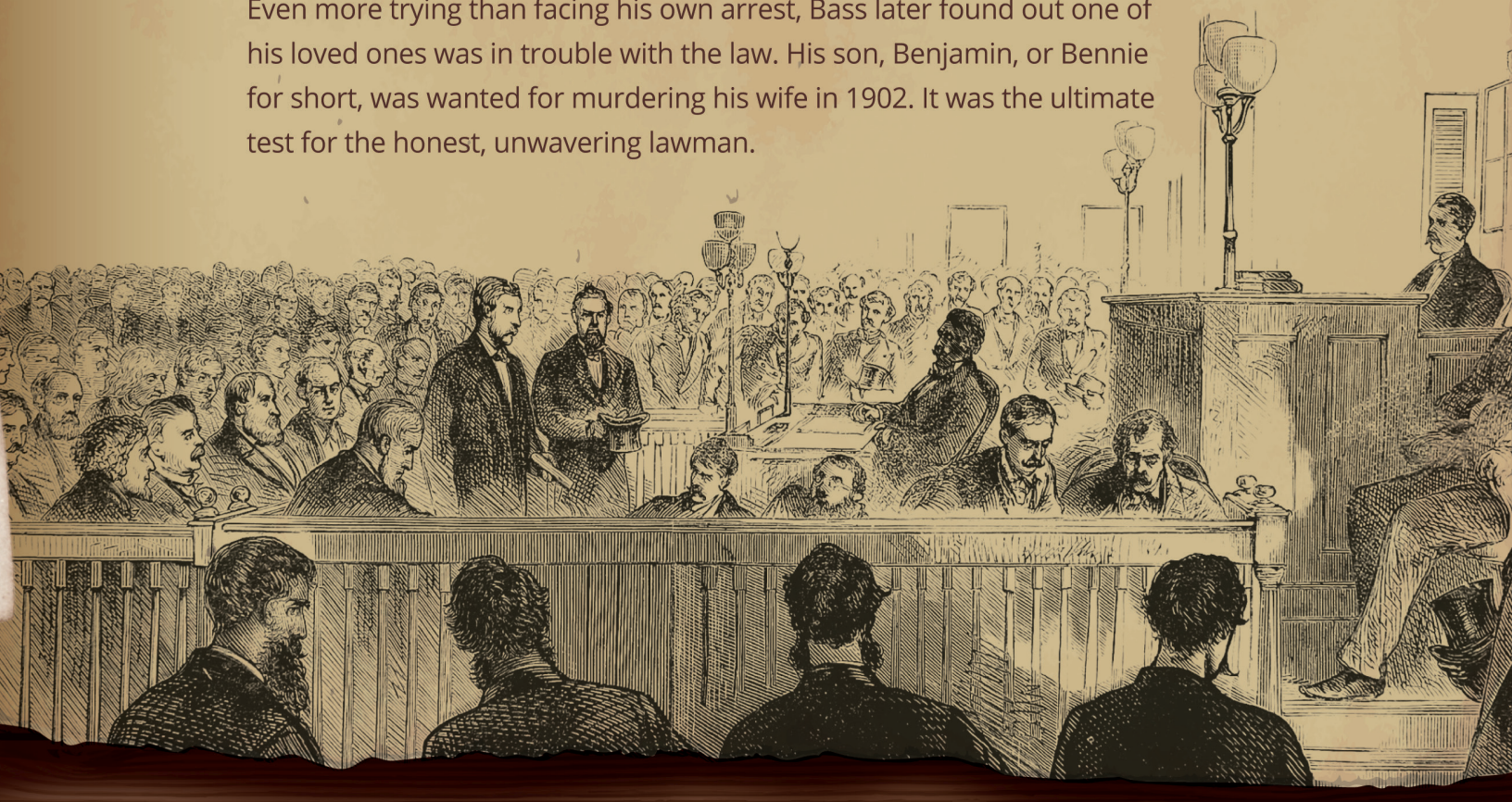
Metal cuffs that go around a person's wrists to restrain them. Law enforcement has used them for many years to apprehend criminals. Bass Reeves carried them whenever he was on the job.

No One Above the Law

Bass Reeves was admired not just for capturing criminals, but for his dedication to upholding the law no matter the circumstances. Even he had to answer to the law when his cook was killed on one of his trips.

Reports vary on what exactly happened. Some say Reeves and his cook got into an argument, some say the cook had attacked Reeves's dog, and others say it was just a misfiring of Reeves's gun while he was cleaning it. Regardless, Bass was later tried for the murder of his cook. He sought the help of one of his lawyer friends, and after all the testimonies were heard, Bass was eventually found innocent. He returned to the line of duty, but the whole trial had cost him most of his savings.

Even more trying than facing his own arrest, Bass later found out one of his loved ones was in trouble with the law. His son, Benjamin, or Bennie for short, was wanted for murdering his wife in 1902. It was the ultimate test for the honest, unwavering lawman.



No Exceptions

Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), 1902

Bass's guns felt heavier in their holsters than normal. If Bennie resisted arrest, he didn't know if he could bring himself to use them on his own son.

He looked at the house where Bennie was holed up. For two weeks, he'd tracked and hunted down his own son like prey. Bass felt like a knife was twisting in his guts. The house appeared abandoned, with broken shutters and a collapsed porch.

"Bennie, don't make me come in there!" Bass called. "Just come out with your hands up!"

The air was still with tense silence. Soon, the slow creak of an old wood board betrayed his son's presence in the house. Sheepishly, Bennie stepped outside.

"They sent you? I... I was hoping it'd be someone else," Bennie said.

"I volunteered," Bass explained. "You're my son. My responsibility."

Bennie didn't move. He seemed glued in place. "I don't know what came over me. She was unfaithful to me, and I just got so angry I grabbed my gun and..."

"Do you still have the weapon on you?" Bass asked.

Bennie shook his head. "It's in the house."

"Alright. Come on. It's time to go." Bass motioned for Bennie to join him. His son shuffled over in his dusty, dirt-stained clothes. His eyes were bloodshot and tired.

Bass gripped his boy tight. He knew Bennie wouldn't run—the grip was to steady himself. He felt hollow and numb as he said, "Benjamin Reeves, you are hereby under arrest."

He clicked the handcuffs onto Bennie's wrists and began the long march back to the courthouse.

A Lawman to the End

Bass Reeves's 32-year career as a U.S. deputy marshal came to an end in 1907 when Oklahoma became a state and other agencies took over law enforcement. The lawman was in his late 60s, and he found new work as a police officer in Muskogee, Oklahoma. It was a much quieter and less exciting patrol. In the two years he spent on duty there, it's said there wasn't a single crime committed on his beat.

By 1910, Bass was sick and nearing the end of his life. He died of **Bright's disease** on January 12, 1910 at the age of 71. After his passing, a local newspaper called the *Muskogee Phoenix* wrote of him, "Bass Reeves has a place in the front rank among those who cleansed out the old Indian Territory of outlaws and desperadoes... During that time, he was sent to arrest some of the most desperate characters that ever infested Indian Territory and endangered life and peace in its borders. And he got his man as often as any of the deputies."

Bass Reeves was a legend in his time and beyond—a real-life superhero. His incredible rise from slavery to lawman showed true strength, hard work, and integrity. In a time when the West ran wild and crime spread as quickly as disease, Bass Reeves stood firmly on the law of the United States of America.

With his freedom, Bass had options. He could have chosen a peaceful life as a farmer or businessman, but he chose to spend his life serving his country and protecting others from crime. He wasn't in it for fame or money, but for the precious freedoms that come from submitting to the law: peace and prosperity for all.

Tools of the Trade: Guns

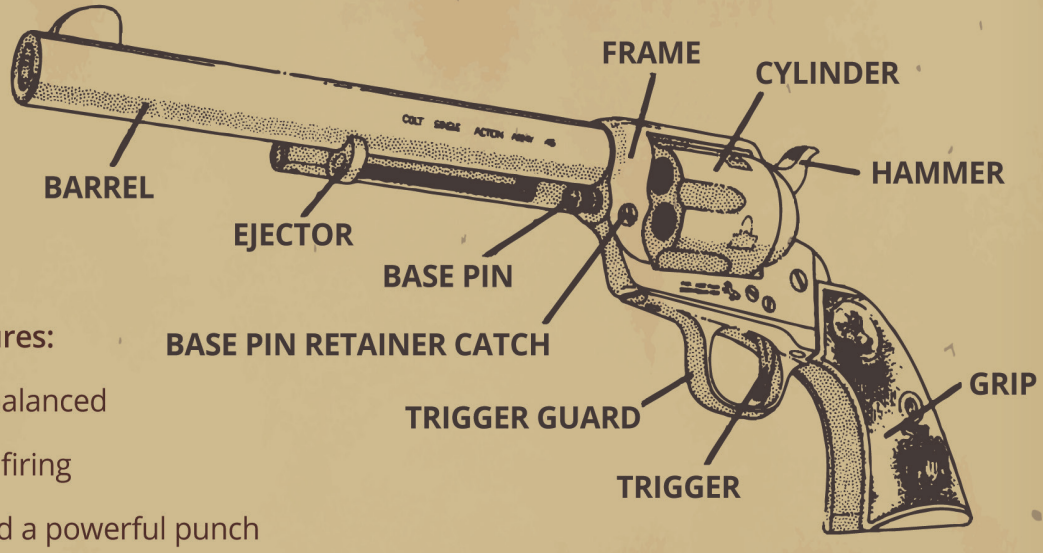
Guns were an essential tool in the Wild West. People needed them for hunting, to put food on the table, and also to defend themselves against any threats. Here are just a few of the guns that were popular in the West during Bass Reeves's lifetime, for both lawmen and outlaws alike!

Colt Single Action Army (1873)

Inventor: Charles B. Richards and William Mason

Gun's Nickname: "The Peacemaker."

- The Colt was one of the most popular sidearm revolvers of the Civil War.
- The gun gets its name from Samuel Colt, the owner of the company that produced the weapon.
- After the Civil War, it continued to be used in the West by lawmen and outlaws due to its multi-chamber capabilities. It had six chambers, giving it another nickname, "the six-shooter."



Best Features:

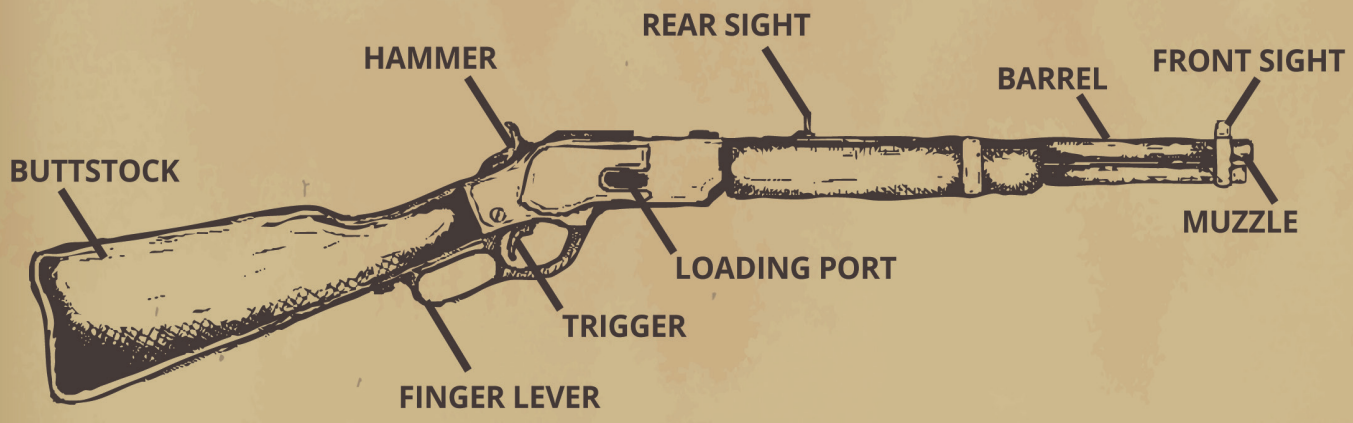
- Well-balanced
- Rapid firing
- Packed a powerful punch

Winchester Rifle (1873)

Inventor: Oliver Winchester

Marketed as "The Gun that Won the West."

- It was built off the designs of the Henry repeating rifles used during the Civil War, though the Winchester wasn't used much by the military.
- It was a great catch-all gun that could handle animal game and self-defense needs. Pretty much anything your handgun couldn't handle, the Winchester could.
- It was one of the first successful centerfire guns, meaning it was more reliable and easy to reload.



Best Features:

- Larger magazine—it could hold up to 14 rounds
- Reliable and low-maintenance
- Built to use the same caliber of ammunition as many popular handguns (People could carry around one type of ammo for all their guns!)

A CHARACTER LARGER THAN LIFE

Bass Reeves has often been described as a real-life Superman or Sherlock Holmes. His imposing physical appearance mixed with his incredible detective skills gave him a legendary reputation. Another character he has often been compared to is the fictional Lone Ranger.

The Lone Ranger was a radio series for many years before getting a movie and TV adaptation. The fearless Texas ranger was the single survivor of a criminal gang attack. He then struck out on his own, with only his Indian sidekick Tonto, to help those in need and establish justice.

Historians debate whether or not this Lone Ranger character was based on the real-life Bass Reeves. Here are a few similarities:

Bass and the Lone Ranger were both Texans who patrolled the Wild West for outlaws.

Bass left silver coins for people, while the Ranger left silver bullets.

Just as the Ranger had an Indian companion, Bass often traveled with Indians in his posse.

Both were masters of disguise.

Both were known to ride horses, and for a part of Bass's career, he was known to ride a gray/white horse similar to the Ranger's.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IS BASS REEVES THE INSPIRATION FOR THE LONE RANGER?



Writing Task

Imagine you are part of Bass Reeves's posse to track down an outlaw. Write a journal entry about your trip, using the information you learned in this story to add details about life in the Wild West.

What did you encounter? Did you find the outlaw and bring him or her to justice?

Glossary

13th Amendment: Ratified on December 6, 1865, the amendment officially abolished slavery in the United States, making the practice illegal.

Abolish: To formally bring an end to a practice, system, or institution.

Body Servant: A personal servant or attendant, sometimes called a valet. A body servant would accompany their master wherever they went and attend to their needs.

Bootlegging: The act of making, selling, or transporting goods illegally. In the Wild West, this was most often used in reference to alcohol.

Bright's Disease: A type of kidney disease where inflammation causes the kidneys to not work properly.

Confederacy: The country created by the 11 Southern states that seceded from the United States from 1860 to 1861. These actions led to the Civil War, which lasted from 1861 to 1865.

Confederate Army: The land-based military of the 11 rebellious states known as the Confederacy.

Emancipation Proclamation: A document President Lincoln issued on January 1, 1863, declaring that all slaves living in the Confederacy were free. It is considered one of the most important documents in American history and a major milestone in expanding freedom in the United States.

Five Civilized Tribes: The Cherokee, Seminole, Creek, Choctaw, and the Chickasaw tribes. These tribes were originally located in the southeastern U.S. states and, in hopes of remaining, took on many practices and cultural traditions of white settlers. However, all five tribes were forced to move west and settle in the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma).

Ideological: A system of related ideas. Usually concerning politics, economics, or religion.

Indian Territory: It was originally all the lands west of the Mississippi, which were designated as Native American land. After the forced removal of many Indian tribes in the southeastern U.S. in the mid-1800s, the Indian Territory was primarily present-day Oklahoma.

Posseman: A member of a posse, which was a group of people who helped a deputy or sheriff enforce the law.

Union: The name for the United States government, and its military, during the Civil War that succeeded in preventing the Confederate states from leaving the nation and continuing slavery.

Warrant: An official document issued by an authority that allows someone to make an arrest or carry out other acts of justice.

Wild West: Another name for the American frontier during the era of westward expansion when crime and lawlessness were common in the territories.

Sources

Alexander, Kathy. "Bass Reeves—Black Hero Marshal." *Legends of America*, www.legendsofamerica.com/we-bassreeves/. Accessed 11 July 2024.

"Article on Bass Reeves." *Newspapers.com*, Daily Arkansas Gazette, 29 Apr. 1890, www.newspapers.com/article/daily-arkansas-gazette-article-on-bass-r/4901558/. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Bell, Bob Boze. "Classic Gunfights: A Deadly Duel at 500 Yards." *True West Magazine*, 25 Jan. 2021, truewestmagazine.com/article/classic-gunfights-a-deadly-duel-at-500-yards/. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Burton, Art, and Mark Boardman. "Once and for All, Is the Lone Ranger Based on Bass Reeves?" *True West Magazine*, 25 Jan. 2021, truewestmagazine.com/article/once-and-for-all-is-the-lone-ranger-based-on-bass-reeves/. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Burton, Arthur T. *Black Gun, Silver Star: The Life and Legend of Frontier Marshal Bass Reeves.* University of Nebraska Press, 2022.

Burton, Art T. "Reeves, Bass." *Oklahoma Historical Society | OHS,* www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=RE020. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Lone Ranger." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/topic/Lone-Ranger. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Eger, Chris. "The (Hand) Gun That Won the West: Colt Single Action Army." *Guns.com*, 17 Nov. 2019, www.guns.com/news/2019/11/18/the-hand-gun-that-won-the-west-colt-single-action-army. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Feller, Daniel. "Andrew Jackson: Domestic Affairs." *Miller Center*, millercenter.org/president/jackson/domestic-affairs. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Fischer, Ron W. "Bass Reeves He Set a Timeless Example." *The Tombstone News*, 19 May 2006, thetombstonenews.com/bass-reeves-he-set-a-timeless-example-p477-84.htm. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Hendricks, Nancy. "Belle Starr (1848–1889)." *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, 28 June 2024, encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/belle-starr-2406/#:~:text=Her%20reputation%20as%20an%20outlaw,later%20owned%20a%20local%20inn. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Schweiger, Chip. "The Reality of Guns and the Wild West." *The Cowboy Accountant*, 23 Sept. 2019, cowboyaccountant.com/2019/09/23/the-reality-of-guns-and-the-wild-west/. Accessed 11 July 2024.

Wallace, Christian. "The Resurrection of Bass Reeves." *Texas Monthly*, 22 June 2021, www.texasmonthly.com/being-texan/the-resurrection-of-bass-reeves/. Accessed 11 July 2024.

"Winchester Model 1873." *Wideners Shooting, Hunting & Gun Blog*, 11 Oct. 2023, www.wideners.com/blog/winchester-model-1873/. Accessed 11 July 2024.

READY FOR MORE?

Experience all the FREE K–12 CONTENT PragerU Kids has to offer!



K–2nd

Imparts American virtues through an illustrated storybook and an animated storytime show.



3rd–5th

Character lessons and the foundations of Western Civilization are passed down through this time-traveling animated show.



3rd–5th

Kids unwrap clues to learn about America's 50 states—and why our Founders gave each a powerful voice.



3rd–5th

Learn about great leaders and their societal contributions in this game show based on our biographical books.



6th+

Tweens/teens learn critical life skills and develop moral character.

K-12th



Download free e-books at PragerUkids.com or purchase printed copies on Amazon.



6th+

Hilarious skits tackle leftist historical bias by covering major world-shaping revolutions.



6th+

Lighting an entrepreneurial fire in the next generation by showcasing young business creators pursuing the American dream.



6th+

Young people gain skills to make responsible decisions and become productive adults through this fun, fast financial literacy show.



6th+

Kids learn about different government systems and public policies, and better appreciate America.



6th+

Builds informed and engaged young citizens by quizzing kids about the U.S. government and how our republic works.

PragerU Kids

Experience Fun, Interactive, and Educational Content at
PragerUkids.com

PragerU KIDS

Since its beginning, America has been a place for the bold and brave. A nation of fighters and survivors who chased destiny across a wild continent. *Trailblazers of America* tells the incredible true stories of:

Daniel Boone, Johnny Appleseed, Meriwether Lewis & William Clark, Davy Crockett, John C. Frémont, John Sutter, and Bass Reeves.

These remarkable men traveled unknown wilderness, crossed vast plains and mountains, and tamed a dangerous frontier. As America grew from sea to shining sea, these trailblazers and their adventures shaped not only their nation's borders, but also its spirit.