

# **The American West**

by Clemen D. B. Gina

(Adapted book. Beginner level)

## CHAPTER ONE

### **The First Americans: The Indians**

The American Indians came from Asia about 40,000 years ago! They crossed the Bering Strait. Then they went down to North and South America. About 20 million Indians lived in America when the first explorers arrived. These Indians lived in many different tribes. Every tribe had a chief.

The Indians and the explorers were friends. The Indians taught the explorers how to grow corn, potatoes and tobacco. They taught them how to travel by canoe in the wilderness.

The explorers brought the Indians rifles, tools, cattle and horses. The explorers also brought illnesses. Many Indians died from these illnesses.

The Indians of the Plains were expert hunters. They rode fast horses. They hunted the buffalo with bows and arrows or rifles.

These Indians followed the buffalo across the Plains. They used the buffalo for food, clothes and tepees.

The other American Indians were farmers. They farmed, fished and hunted small animals.

These native Americans were happy people. They were strong, healthy and courageous. They loved and respected nature.

After many years, more new settlers and explorers went to America. They wanted to go to the West. They wanted to live there. They took the land from the Indians. The Indians were very angry and the Indian Wars started. Many people were killed.

The Indians lost their land and their way of life. They went to live on reservations.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Daniel Boone

Before 1803 most of America was a wilderness. There were no maps and no roads.

Daniel Boone was a famous explorer and pioneer. In 1769 he traveled across the Appalachian Mountains to Kentucky. He opened the road to the West.

Daniel Boone and his family built a cabin and a fort in Kentucky. Boone had many adventures with the Indians. The Indians captured and killed two of his sons. In 1778 Boone was captured by the Shawnee Indians. He was their prisoner but these Indians respected him. He was a strong fighter and a courageous man.

Boone helped the pioneers. His fort protected settlers during Indian attacks. Boone was an American free spirit. He loved freedom and adventure. In 1799 he went to Missouri. He said to his friends, "There are too many people here. I'm going to the West!" America grew very quickly.

Johnny Appleseed was another American pioneer. In the 1800s he planted apple trees on the frontier. He helped the settlers in Ohio and Indiana.

## CHAPTER THREE

# The Lewis and Clark Expedition

In 1803 the United States President, Thomas Jefferson, bought the Louisiana territory from France. He paid \$15 million for this immense piece of land.

President Jefferson liked science. It was very interesting. He wanted to learn about the plants and animals of the new territory.

In May 1804 President Jefferson asked Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the Louisiana Purchase. Lewis and Clark were the first white men to see this land.

This important expedition began in St. Louis, Missouri.

About 50 men traveled up the Missouri River. They explored the territory and made maps.

After six months they stopped and built Fort Mandan. They spent the long winter there.

In the spring of 1805 the expedition continued. An Indian woman called Sacagawea went on the expedition with the explorers. She was a friendly Shoshone Indian.

Sacagawea spoke English and other Indian languages. She was very helpful. Sacagawea's brother was a Shoshone chief. A Shoshone guide helped the explorers cross the high mountains. The journey was difficult and dangerous. Grizzly bears and other animals attacked the explorers.

The explorers built canoes. They traveled down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean! They arrived at the Pacific Ocean in November 1805. They built a fort there.

The expedition returned to Missouri in September 1806. The explorers traveled 8,000 miles (12,800 kilometers) from May 1804 to September 1806.

The Lewis and Clark expedition was very successful. Lewis and Clark made many maps. They brought back a lot of information about the West.

In the 1840s John Fremont and Kit Carson explored the land between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. They visited California and Oregon. Fremont made the first scientific map of the West.

Another important pioneer was Davy Crockett. He fought for the independence of Texas.

This was the beginning of the great movement to the West.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Let's go West!

After the Lewis and Clark expedition settlers, gold prospectors and trappers went to the West. The American frontier was immense.

Settlers wanted to build homes and farms in the West. They wanted a better life. Gold prospectors wanted to find gold and become rich. Trappers wanted to hunt wild animals. This was an exciting period.

In 1841 thousands of pioneers began their long journey. They started in Independence, Missouri. From there they took the Oregon Trail or the Santa Fe Trail. They traveled for four to six months.

Most journeys began in the spring.

The pioneers wanted to arrive before winter. The pioneers traveled in covered wagons pulled by mules or oxen. They put food, clothes, furniture and other things in the covered wagon. A lot of families took cattle and sheep.

Many covered wagons traveled together. This was called a wagon train. All the wagon trains had a leader called a captain. They also had a scout. The scout knew the trail well. He walked in front of the others to look for Indians or other dangers.

The journey was long, difficult and dangerous. It was difficult to cross big rivers and tall mountains.

The weather was another problem. In the summer it was very hot. There was little water to drink. There was little grass for the animals to eat. Rain and snow were also a problem.

About 10,000 people died on the Oregon Trail between 1835 and 1845. The Indians killed only 400 people!

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Life on the Frontier

When the settlers arrived at their destination they began to work. They began to build a home and plant crops. The home was usually made of logs. It was called a log cabin. It was a small home with one or two rooms. The settlers made the furniture. They used logs to make tables, chairs and beds.

Men, women and children planted crops. Corn and wheat were important crops. The settlers ate a lot of corn. The men hunted buffalo and other animals. Men, women and children worked all day. There was little free time.

There were no shops on the frontier. The settlers bought some things from Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger. Some women brought a spinning wheel to the frontier. These women made yarn. They used yarn to make clothes.

Illness was a big danger on the frontier. There were no hospitals, few doctors and very little medicine! Many people died at a young age.

Most settlers lived far from churches. When they wanted to get married, they waited for the "circuit rider". The "circuit rider" was a religious man. He traveled on the frontier. Settlers often waited months for the "circuit rider".

Who were the frontier people? The frontier people came from the East, the South and the Indiana Territory. They also came from Europe, Scandinavia and China! Most



settlers were honest people but some were outlaws. Some of them wanted excitement and adventure.

Frontier people were strong and courageous. They loved the freedom and adventure of the frontier. They were true American free spirits.

Villages and towns began to grow on the frontier. Some became important cities.

## CHAPTER SIX

# The California Gold Rush

In 1848 John Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Fort in California. This western territory became famous. Thousands of people traveled to California to look for gold. This was the California Gold Rush. These people were called "Forty-Niners".

The first "Forty-Niners" arrived in San Francisco in February 1849 on the steamship California. Others came to California on the Oregon and California Trail. In 1849 almost 100,000 people arrived in California to look for gold! San Francisco became a very important city.

There were many small mining towns in the California Gold Country. Many "Forty-Niners" found gold, but only some of them became rich and important.

The discovery of gold changed the destiny of California and the West. The population of California grew very quickly. It became the 31st state of the United States in 1850.

A lot of people traveled to the West. A lot of gold traveled from California to the East. From 1852 the Wells Fargo stagecoaches traveled from the East Coast to the West Coast. Wells Fargo was a very important company in the West. The stagecoaches carried passengers, money, mail and gold across the continent.

A journey across America by stagecoach was a great adventure!

Four or six horses pulled the Wells Fargo stagecoaches. There were four to six passengers in every stagecoach. The journey was very uncomfortable. The stagecoaches traveled all day and all night. Passengers slept inside the coaches on hard seats. Indians and outlaws attacked the stagecoaches.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# The Indian Wars

The Indian Wars began in the 1800s. Thousands of pioneers went to the West. They took the Indians' land. The Indians were angry. They did not want to lose their land.

### The Wars of the Midwest

In 1811 the Shawnee Indians of the Indiana Territory attacked the settlers and the U.S. Army.

These Indian Wars continued until 1832. The Black Hawk War was the last Indian war in the Midwest. The Indians lost this war and their land.

### The Wars of the Southeast

In the 1830s Osceola was the chief of the Seminole Indians of Florida. He said, "We will fight until the last drop of Seminole blood!" The Seminole Indians did not want to leave their land. They fought for many years. In 1837 Chief Osceola was captured. Most of the Seminoles were killed.

The Cherokee Indians were a strong and important tribe. They had big plantations and farms. The settlers wanted their land. In 1839 the U.S. Government told the Cherokees to leave their homes. They went to an Indian reservation in Oklahoma. Many Indians died during the long journey. The journey was called the Trail of Tears.

## The Wars of the Great Plains

In the 1850s many pioneers crossed the Great Plains. Many of them settled there. The Sioux and Cheyenne Indians fought against these settlers.

The Sioux and Cheyenne Indians were courageous warriors. The Sioux Chiefs were Crazy Horse, Red Cloud and Sitting Bull. They told their warriors, "Fight to kill, or you will lose your lands!"

The Sioux and Cheyenne Indians attacked U.S. Army forts and settlers. The fighting was terrible. It continued for many years.

The U.S. Government told the Indians to go to an Indian reservation. Chiefs Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull did not want to go. There were a lot of brutal battles. Many people were killed.

The Apache and Comanche Indians also fought against the U.S. Army and the settlers for many years.

The Apaches were great warriors. They loved their land and their freedom. They didn't want to lose them. They preferred to fight and die. Geronimo and Cochise were famous Apache chiefs. Their courage was legendary. Everyone was afraid of Geronimo and Cochise. The Indian Wars ended in 1890.

More books on <http://adapted-english-books.site>

Hope you have enjoyed the reading!

Come back to <http://adapted-english-books.site> to find more fascinating and exciting stories!