

Adventures on the American Frontier

PIONEER SHOW PEOPLE

Part Four

Annie Oakley and the Wild West



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In the years of the Civil War and right after, a little girl named Annie Moses was growing up in Ohio. Her father had died, and Annie wanted to help her family by hunting for food using his rifle. She took the rifle down from its rack on the wall when she was no taller than it was.

Soon she learned to shoot well, and she brought home rabbits and wild fowl for her family to eat. Before long, she was able to shoot more than her family needed, and she had some to sell.



A neighbor told her, "The hotels down in Cincinnati will buy good quail to serve in their dining rooms. They pay a high price. I'll take yours to market for you."

So Annie kept hunting. She hunted so much that she became a "crack shot." She could hit a quail in the head from far away. She shipped the birds, wrapped in cool, wet marsh grasses, down to Cincinnati.

"I'll take all that little hunter girl will send me," said the manager of the hotel that bought the birds. "My customers



don't like to find shot in the meat they're eating. Annie Moses's birds never have shot anywhere but in the head."



By the time Annie was sixteen, she could follow a bird as it rose into the air, sight along the barrel of her old rifle, and bring the bird down with never a miss. She spent her time tramping the fields and woods and marshes around her Darke County home.

Then one day, a letter came from her older sister, who had married and was living in Cincinnati. "Come and live with Joe and me," her sister wrote. "It's time you saw a life beyond those woods. I'll teach you to read and write and the other things a



young lady should know.”

Annie was afraid to go to the city,
but her mother knew it was best for her.
Cincinnati was the “Queen City of the West”
in those days, and it was too good a chance
for Annie to pass up.

So Annie went. Her sister showed her
the great buildings and the wide streets.
She saw the fine houses high on the hills,
the busy river with its steamboats, the
canal boats snaking their way down to the
river, and the puffing steam locomotives.