

*Adventures on the American Frontier*

# Following the Frontier West

Part One

We'll Be There with Bells On!



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This book features QR codes that link to audio of the book being narrated so that readers can follow along.

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All day long, the covered wagons slipped and slid down the mountainside. Rumbling and creaking, they bumped over rock ledges and eased around sharp curves on the narrow road. Now the sun dropped behind the next mountain ridge to the west, and the day's travel was nearly over.



The road stretched clear and open to the inn in the valley where the wagoners would spend the night. The sound of the horses' hooves was like a beating of drums in time to the music of the bells that the horses wore hanging from arches over their shoulders. Six horses pulled each of the ten big wagons. Each driver rode on the back of one of the two horses hitched closest to the wagon, called the "wheel" team.

The man who held the long reins of the head wagon spoke to his horse. "We'll



ride up to the inn in style, Prince," he said.

"Clear road ahead!" With his left hand he gave a little flick to the reins that reached to the bridles of the first pair of horses in his team. At the same moment, he raised his whip with his right hand and snapped the end of it above the ears of the second pair of horses, the "swing" team.

The gentle jangling of the bells grew sharp and then was lost in the hard beat of hooves on the stony road and the rumble of the wagon wheels.

Duke, the bulldog that trotted along under the wagon all day tied to the rear axle, yelped with joy at the faster pace and set his short legs to running.

No one watching the six dapple-gray horses stepping out so briskly would have guessed that they had been pulling a load of almost four tons all day as they traveled the road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh on the Pennsylvania frontier.

The United States was a brand new country then, in 1785, and Pittsburgh, the



little town that was growing around Fort Pitt, seemed far in the West.

Each team of the ten-wagon train stepped out in its best style, following the wagon ahead. The innkeeper heard them coming and went to see the sight.

“Get the table laid, Betsy!” he called to his wife. “There’ll soon be ten hungry men to feed.” He went out into the shed in the big inn yard to empty sacks of grain into the grain bins. Those sixty big horses would be hungry, too.