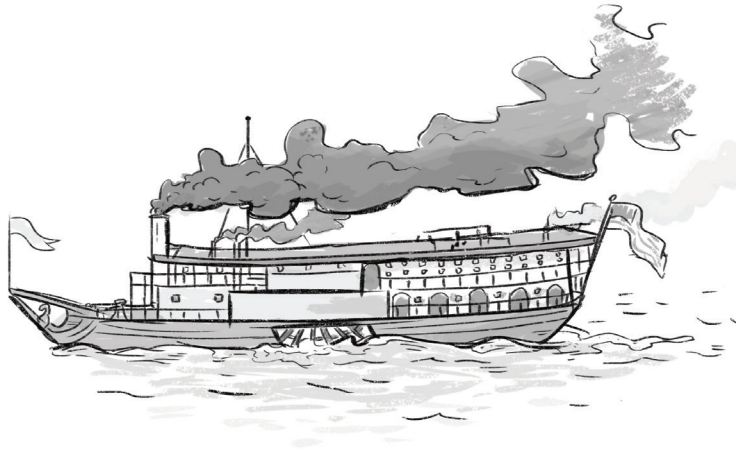


Adventures on the American Frontier

Pioneers on the Early Waterways

Part One

Davy Crockett
and the Ring-Tailed Roarer



A Royal Fireworks Production

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Unionville, New York



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P.O. Box 399
41 First Avenue
Unionville, NY 10988-0399
(845) 726-4444
fax: (845) 726-3824
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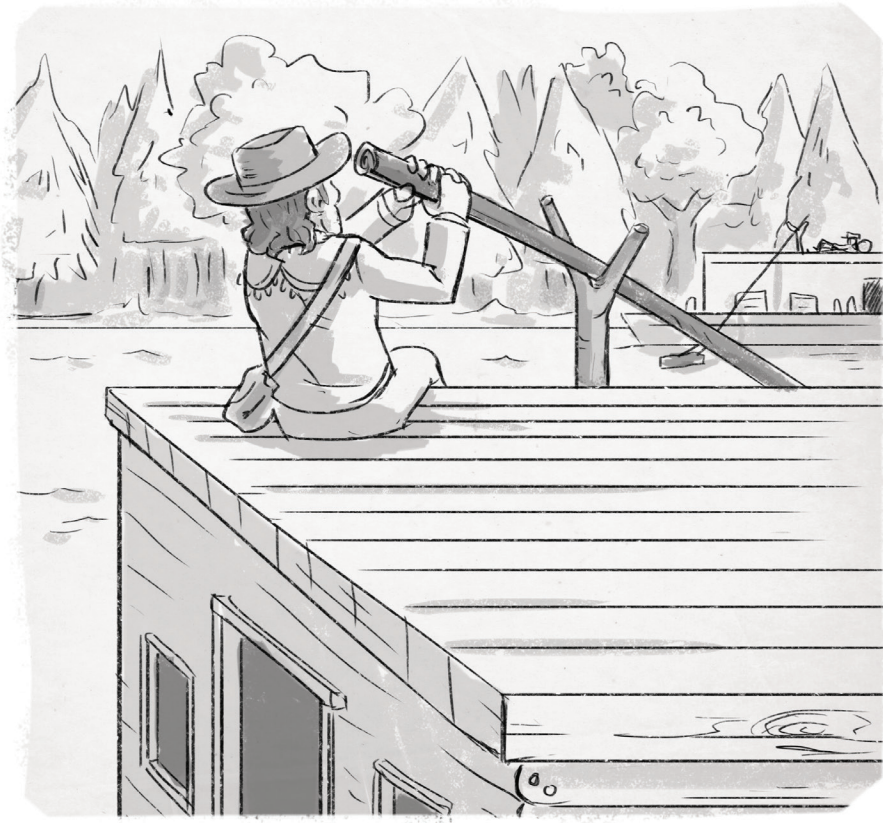
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Davy Crockett sat on the roof of a flatboat as it floated slowly down the Ohio River. He yawned as he steered the boat using the long steering oar that rested in the forked stick at the back of the boat.



It was lazy day back in the early 1800s, when the United States was a new country just beginning to settle the land along the Ohio River and the many rivers that fed into it. People who traveled in the frontier country did so by horseback over the narrow trails or by boat on the rivers. The Ohio River was the great highway to the west. It led to the Mississippi River, and boats could float all the way down to the city of New Orleans near the Gulf of Mexico.



Davy Crockett liked the life of a scout or a hunter better than the life of a boatman, but he and three of his friends had a load of furs and bacon to sell. They had put together a flatboat of oak boards, loaded it, and were off for New Orleans. There they would sell the furs and the bacon. Then they would take the flatboat apart and sell the boards for lumber, for the boxlike flatboats were too clumsy to be poled back up the river against the current. The flatboatmen would make their way back home on foot.

The flatboat drifted on. Davy moved the steering oar a little to head the boat around a bend. The quiet of the summer afternoon made him sleepy, and he rested his back against the forked stick. He was having trouble keeping his eyes open when he saw a keelboat nearby. A big boatman lay on the other boat deck, fast asleep, his mouth wide open as he snored. It was more than Davy could stand.

“I can’t let him go on like that,” Davy muttered. “The poor man will swallow a



fly!" He lifted the long steering oar from the water, swung it neatly over onto the deck of the keelboat, and tapped it on the sleeper's head.

The whiskery boatman was on his feet before Davy could get the steering oar back into place. He rubbed his head and glared around to see what had hit him. His eyes fell on Davy, who was leaning on the steering oar as if nothing had happened.

"Hello, stranger!" the man bellowed.

"Who asked you to crack my head?"