

*Adventures on the American Frontier*

# PIONEER TRADERS

Part Five

The Bent Brothers  
on the Santa Fe Trail



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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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Lewis and Clark finished their long journey to explore the American West in 1806. When they arrived in the city of St. Louis, a small boy named Charles Bent was in the crowd that had gathered at the riverfront to greet them. His father, who was in charge of surveying that great new part of the United States, held Charles's hand tightly. Everyone in St. Louis seemed to be trying to push down to the Mississippi River's edge to be the first to see the two explorers as they stepped off their boat.





“Remember this day, Charles,” said his father. “It marks the beginning of a new frontier for our country.”



The Bent family had always followed the frontiers of America, beginning with the first one who sailed to the new land soon after the *Mayflower* took the Pilgrims to Plymouth. When New England began to look well settled, the Bents crossed the mountains and went down the Ohio River to new homelands. Then, just six days before this day of celebration, Silas Bent had brought his family to St. Louis to follow the newly opening frontier into the Louisiana Territory.

St. Louis was changing from a tiny fur-trading post to a growing city. There were about 4,000 people living there when the Bent family arrived. Everyone who went west went through St. Louis. There were fur traders, hunters, adventurers, people looking for new homes, merchants in search of new trade, and miners in search of gold. They went to the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon, to California, and then to places in between. Charles listened and learned about the great flow of trade between the



East and the West.

When Charles was nine, his brother William was born. The fur trade was becoming a great business in St. Louis, and hundreds of young men came through the city on their way west. Charles took little William down to the riverfront to see the boats that came in, bringing furs from up the river, as well the first farm products from the newly settled farms. William, too, began to feel the excitement of the flow of people and goods through the frontier city.