



FIRST · STEPS · IN · THE
HISTORY · OF · OUR
COUNTRY

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"WESTWARD THE COURSE OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY."

This is a reproduction of the well-known painting by Leutze in the Capitol at Washington. Bishop Berkeley's famous line is made the motive of a picture which illustrates the spirit of our people as they have pressed steadily Westward. The scene is at sunset; the long train of pioneer families, led by scouts, has toiled up the mountain-trails to the summit; and the brave emigrants forget their weariness as they look off upon the glowing, fertile plains where they will plant their homes.

First Steps in the History of Our Country

By

WILLIAM A. MOWRY, PH.D.

and

ARTHUR MAY MOWRY, A.M.

Authors of "A History of the United States for Schools."



SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

NEW YORK BOSTON CHICAGO

1898



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To

THE MEMORY OF

C. E. M.

Preface

The study of the history of our country is every year becoming more and more important. New books for the young on history, biography, and historical fiction are constantly appearing. It is now very generally admitted that this study should be taken up at an earlier age than has hitherto been customary. Everybody now agrees that the schools should have an elementary book preceding the regular, systematic pursuit of this branch in the two higher grades of the grammar school.

But this preliminary book should not be an "epitome" of the history of our country. It ought not to be a history for more mature pupils, boiled down to the size of a small book for smaller boys and girls. Such a book should have no place in the schools. The biographical plan has great advantages for beginners in the study of this subject. History is a record of events. Events presuppose *actors*, who bring about the events. It is the action of men and women that makes history both valuable and interesting.

Another important factor in this elementary study of history is to create a love for the study in the minds of the children. It is, therefore, necessary that this early treatise should be written in the most entertaining and engaging manner. To this end but few characters can be made prominent. The leading events of each period are made to cluster around a few leading persons. There are many other great personages in the history of our country, but it is by no means necessary to give them a place in this preliminary book. A proper presentation of the lives of the "history-makers" will tend to cultivate a taste for further reading and study. As an aid to teachers and pupils, a select list of books appropriate for supplementary reading has been prepared.

In a book like this, the authors have thought it important to confine the attention of the pupils principally to the text itself. Hence they have omitted all analyses, reviews, foot-notes, appendices, etc.

Recitations should be both by topics and by questions. A few topics have been introduced at the end of each chapter. These are merely suggestive and more should be added by every teacher. Of course the topical recitation should be supplemented by questions which the teacher will devise at the time, and which will tend to bring out the main points of the lesson, especially those that the pupils have failed to note in reciting upon the topic. It is expected that each teacher will prepare and use his own questions, appropriate to the particular class under his instruction, according to the advancement, age, grade, and capacity of the class and the amount of time at his disposal.

The authors accordingly have not thought it best to introduce full and complete sets of questions, either to save time or to aid the teacher in conducting the recitation. They have, however, presented a few typical "thought-questions" at the end of each chapter. These are prepared only as hints and pointers, to suggest such a course to the teacher as will help to avoid the too usual parrot-like method of study—learning the words of the text but not getting down to the thought. These questions can be answered by the study of the text and by proper thought upon what the text says. Different answers to these questions by different pupils are to be encouraged by the teacher. Independence of thought and expression is of deep importance.

In the teaching of history, geographical connections should be constantly observed. The study of history aids the geography and the geography is everywhere an aid to the history. At the time that the pupils are studying history by this book they are usually studying geography also. Each will help the other.

The authors have not thought it wise to introduce many dates. Only a few should be memorized at this early period. It is recommended that all dates in the text which are found in parentheses *should not be memorized*. Neither should the dates at the beginning of the chapters, which show the years of the birth and the death of the person whose name heads the chapter, be committed to memory.

W. A. M.
A. M. M.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (The Beggar),	15
II.—CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (The Prince),	22
III.—JOHN CABOT,	30
IV.—FERDINAND DE SOTO,	36
V.—SIR WALTER RALEIGH,	41
VI.—JOHN SMITH,	48
VII.—WILLIAM BRADFORD,	56
VIII.—JOHN WINTHROP,	63
IX.—WILLIAMS AND HOOKER,	68
X.—PETER STUYVESANT,	74
XI.—LORD BALTIMORE,	82
XII.—WILLIAM PENN,	87
XIII.—KING PHILIP,	93
XIV.—CAVALIER DE LA SALLE,	99
XV.—JAMES WOLFE,	104
XVI.—SAMUEL ADAMS,	111
XVII.—PAUL REVERE,	121
XVIII.—GEORGE WASHINGTON,	129
XIX.—NATHANIEL GREENE,	140

CHAPTER	PAGE
XX.—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,	146
XXI.—GEORGE ROGERS CLARK,	157
XXII.—ALEXANDER HAMILTON,	166
XXIII.—THOMAS JEFFERSON,	174
XXIV.—ROBERT FULTON,	184
XXV.—STEPHEN DECATUR,	190
XXVI.—ANDREW JACKSON,	199
XXVII.—CALHOUN, CLAY, WEBSTER,	208
XXVIII.—SAMUEL HOUSTON,	220
XXIX.—MARCUS WHITMAN,	228
XXX.—SAMUEL F. B. MORSE,	235
XXXI.—ABRAHAM LINCOLN,	243
XXXII.—ROBERT E. LEE,	255
XXXIII.—ULYSSES S. GRANT,	262
XXXIV.—DAVID G. FARRAGUT,	270
XXXV.—HORACE MANN,	277
XXXVI.—CLARA BARTON,	290
XXXVII.—THOMAS A. EDISON,	302



ILLUSTRATIONS



Westward the Course of Empire,	Frontispiece
The Nation's Capitol at Washington,	Page 14

PAGE	PAGE
Columbus in his Study, 15	In a Pilgrim's Home, 60
Columbus Begging Shelter, 15	A Spying Indian, 60
The Boy Columbus, 16	Standish and the Challenge, 61
Columbus Sneered At, 19	Portrait of Governor Winthrop, 63
Columbus Crossing Atlantic, 21	The Six Ships at Salem, 63
Columbus Landing, 22	Governor Endicott's Pear-tree, 64
Flagship of Columbus, 23	Mrs. Winthrop Packing, 66
Columbus in Chains, 27	Roger Williams Driven Out, 68
Coat of Arms of Columbus, 29	First Church at Salem, 69
Embarkation of John Cabot, 30	Williams Meeting Friendly In- dians, 70
Cabot's Ship among Icebergs, 32	Hooker's Expedition to Connecti- cut, 72
A Bear Catching Cod, 34	On Narragansett Bay, 73
Royal Arms of England, 35	Portrait of Peter Stuyvesant, 74
De Soto's Men in the Swamp, 36	View of New Amsterdam, 74
Burial of De Soto, 39	Hudson Sailing up the River, 75
Portrait of Sir Walter Raleigh, 41	Stuyvesant and Petitioners, 77
Raleigh and the Queen, 41	English Fleet at New Amsterdam, 79
Raleigh's Frightened Servant, 45	Portrait of Lord Baltimore, 82
Virginia Dare, Seized by Indians, 46	Calvert's Landing, 82
Indian Pipes, 47	Maryland Cavalier Protecting a Puritan, 85
Portrait of Capt. John Smith, 48	Portrait of William Penn, 87
Pocahontas Saving the Life of Capt. John Smith, 48	Penn's House in Philadelphia, 87
Smith Exploring the River, 51	Penn before King Charles, 89
Indians Wonder at Smith Writing, 52	Pennsylvania Manor House, 90
Wedding of Pocahontas, 53	Penn's Talk with the Indians, 92
Signature of King James I., 55	King Philip, 93
A Pilgrim Governor, 56	The Pioneer's Enemy, 93
A Ship from England, 56	
The <i>Mayflower</i> in Winter, 59	

	PAGE		PAGE
Annawan a Prisoner of War,	96	Hamilton at Yorktown,	168
Indian Weapons,	98	Washington's Inaugural Journey,	170
A French Explorer,	99	Federal Hall, New York,	171
First Vessel on the Lakes,	100	Old Continental Money,	173
A Birch Bark Canoe,	103	Portrait of Thomas Jefferson,	174
Portrait of General Wolfe,	104	Jefferson Writing Declaration of Independence,	174
Heights of Abraham,	104	Patrick Henry in his Great Speech,	175
Wolfe on the Way to Battle,	106	Napoleon Decides to Sell Louisiana,	179
The Death of Wolfe,	108	Livingston Congratulating Monroe,	180
Portrait of Samuel Adams,	111	Lady and Gentleman of 1800,	183
Old South Church,	111	Portrait of Robert Fulton,	184
Faneuil Hall,	111	Modern "Ocean Greyhound,"	184
"No Tea on Our Table,"	114	Modern Warship,	184
Boston "Tea Party,"	116	Fitch's Steamboat,	185
Early New England House,	118	Stevens' Steamboat,	186
Paul Revere's Midnight Ride,	121	First Trip of Fulton's <i>Clermont</i> ,	188
The Fight at Concord,	125	Statue of Fulton in the Capitol,	189
A Minute-man,	126	Portrait of Decatur,	190
Flag of Bunker Hill,	127	Burning of the <i>Philadelphia</i> ,	190
Revolutionary Musket,	128	<i>United States</i> Capturing <i>Macedo-</i> <i>nian</i> ,	193
Washington at Valley Forge,	129	The Famous U. S. S. <i>Constitution</i> ,	195
Mount Vernon,	131	Perry at Battle of Lake Erie,	197
The Washington Elm,	132	Portrait of Andrew Jackson,	199
Washington's First Sight of the Stars and Stripes,	135	The Capitol in 1825,	199
Washington at Monmouth,	137	British Officer Ordering Young Jackson to Clean His Boots,	200
Washington at Trenton,	138	General Jackson at Battle of New Orleans,	203
Portrait of Gen. N. Greene,	140	Traveling by Canal Boat,	205
Greene Watching British Drill,	140	Early Railway Train,	206
"I want a Book,"	141	Calhoun, Clay, and Webster,	208
Colonel Tarleton's Rebuff,	144	Clay Forgetting his Poetry,	212
Portrait of Benjamin Franklin,	146	Webster's Reply to Hayne,	216
Franklin and his Kite,	146	Portrait of Samuel Houston,	220
Young Franklin Laughed at by his Future Wife,	148	The Alamo,	220
Franklin and Queen of France,	151	The "Lone Star" Flag,	221
"Independence Hall,"	152	General Scott in Mexico,	223
Franklin at the Constitutional Convention,	153	Discovery of Gold in California,	224
Clark and Emigrant Flatboat,	157	Across the Continent,	228
Midnight Escape to the Fort,	159	The "Ride for Oregon,"	231
Clark at the British Dance,	162	The Western Settler's First Home,	233
Pushing into the Northwest,	165	Portrait of Professor Morse,	235
Young Hamilton's First Speech,	166	Network of Telegraph Wires,	235
Portrait of Alexander Hamilton,	166		

	PAGE		PAGE
Morse's News of his Success,	238	Attack of Ram on the <i>Hartford</i> ,	270
Laying an Ocean Cable,	241	Federal Fleet in Mobile Bay,	270
Portrait of Abraham Lincoln,	243	Young Farragut and his Father,	271
Dome of the Capitol,	243	Farragut's Mortar Boats,	272
Lincoln's Birthplace,	244	Farragut in the Rigging,	274
Young Lincoln Studying by Fire- light,	247	Statue of Horace Mann,	277
Fort Sumter Fired on,	250	Boston State House,	277
Portrait of Jefferson Davis,	251	Old-Time Country School,	279
Lincoln Freeing the Slave,	253	After Spelling-school,	281
Portrait of Gen. R. E. Lee,	255	Master Mending Quill Pen,	283
Arlington, the Home of Lee,	255	The Nation's New Library,	286
A Confederate Soldier,	256	Raising Schoolhouse Flag,	288
Lee and Jackson at Chancellorsville,	258	Portrait of Clara Barton,	290
Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg,	260	Nurse in the Civil War,	290
Confederate Flag of 1861,	261	Red Cross Nurse on Battle-field,	295
Portrait of General Grant,	262	The Johnstown Flood,	296
Into the Wilderness,	262	Battleship <i>Maine</i> at Havana,	298
A Federal Soldier,	263	The <i>Maine</i> after the Explosion,	299
Grant in the Wilderness,	265	Portrait of Thomas A. Edison,	302
Portrait of General Sherman,	266	Corner of the Laboratory,	302
Grant's Tomb,	269	Gold Hunters in Alaska,	303
St. Gaudens' Statue of Farragut,	270	Young Edison Selling Papers,	306
		Edison and New York Operator,	308

LIST OF MAPS.

	PAGE		PAGE
Map that Columbus Studied,	17	Our Country after the French War,	109
Route of Columbus,	24	Map of Revere's Ride,	122
What Columbus Discovered,	28	Map of Yorktown,	143
What Cabot Discovered,	34	The Young Nation at its Start,	156
Long March of De Soto,	37	The Old "Northwest,"	164
Where Raleigh's Colony Landed,	42	United States in 1802,	181
Where John Smith Explored,	49	United States in 1803,	181
Where Pilgrims and Puritans Set- tled,	57	United States in 1845,	227
Where Baltimore Started his Colony,	83	United States in 1846,	227
What La Salle and Hennepin Opened for France,	102	United States in 1848,	227
Our Country before the French War,	109	The Old "Oregon Country,"	229
		Map of Lee's Battles,	257
		The Civil War,	267