



# LAURA INGALLS WILDER

## PIIONEER WOMAN

Dona Herweck Rice

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# Table of Contents

Go West! .....	4
In the Beginning .....	8
Reaching for the Dream .....	14
On Their Own .....	18
A Dream Achieved .....	24
Sing It! .....	28
Glossary .....	30
Index .....	31
Your Turn! .....	32



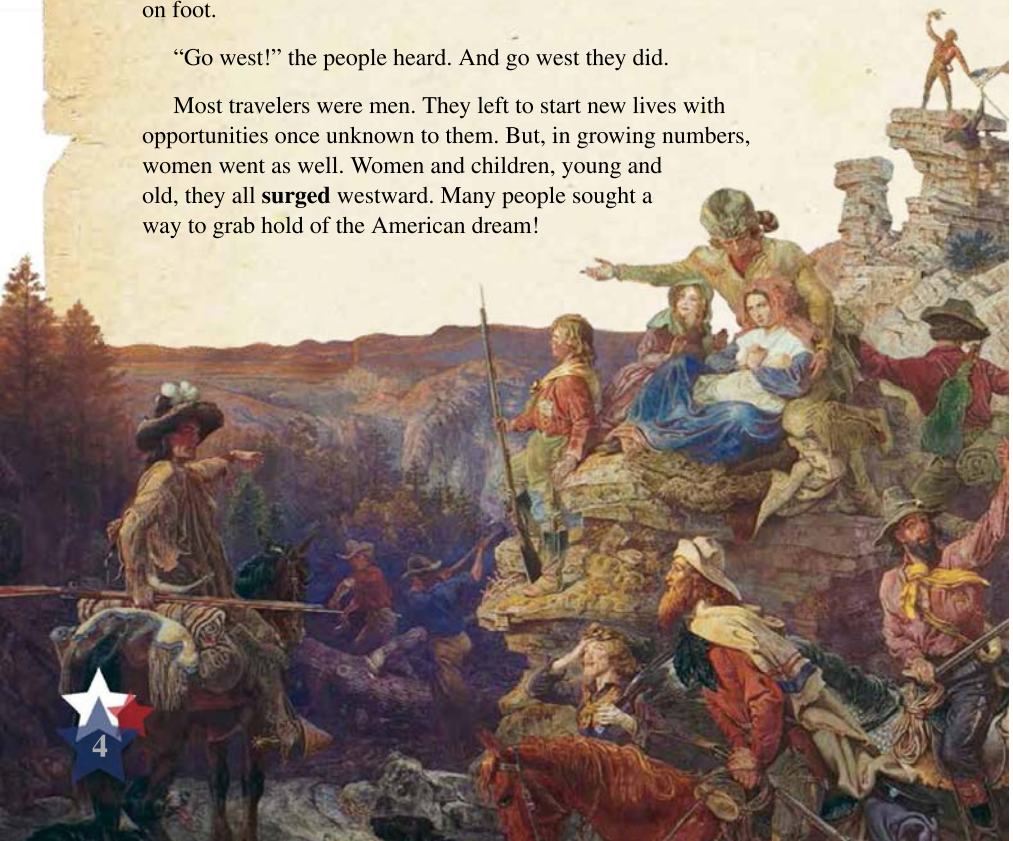
# Go West!

“Go west!” they said.

The message was everywhere. In the general store, neighbors met and talked about it. Newspapers told of westward land available for the taking. A person only had to be bold enough to travel there and claim it. Farmers and townspeople feeling hemmed in and restricted by limited resources dreamed of wide-open spaces. They dreamed of a chance to own land. Families made plans through long winter months, looking toward the spring. That’s when mountains and plains could be crossed by wagon or on foot.

“Go west!” the people heard. And go west they did.

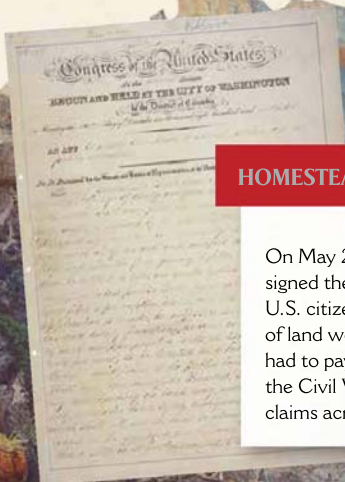
Most travelers were men. They left to start new lives with opportunities once unknown to them. But, in growing numbers, women went as well. Women and children, young and old, they all **surged** westward. Many people sought a way to grab hold of the American dream!



Much has been written about the pioneers of the great American westward movement. One woman who lived it wrote about her experiences. Millions of people around the world feel that they have lived the pioneer life through her words. The woman's name is Laura Ingalls Wilder. And this is her story.



Laura Ingalls Wilder



## HOMESTEAD ACT



On May 20, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act. It stated that U.S. citizens could apply for up to 160 acres of land west of the Mississippi River. All they had to pay was an \$18 filing fee. By the end of the Civil War, there were 15,000 homestead claims across the West.

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