

How a Town is Started

First, there's a house where people live. Then another house . . . and another . . . and another . . . Finally, there are so many that someone builds a store. And now the people can buy things without having to bring them in from far away.

But that's not always how a town starts. Sometimes the store comes first. This is a story about one that did. It's a story that starts with the words "Once upon a time. . ." But It is a true story. A story that has happened in many places all over the world.

Once upon a time some men in a boat came up river to explore wild country. The men were traders. They wanted to trade or sell things to the people in the wild country and buy things from them. The people who lived there could have been almost anybody, but these were Native Americans.

Day and night, day and night, the men in the boat kept moving up the river. Finally, they came to a place where another big river emptied into their river.

"Look," the leader said, "here where the two rivers meet is a good place to build our store. Plenty of trees that we can cut down to make our buildings. Land's high enough that we can fight off any enemies that attack. And the Native Americans can come to us from both rivers to sell things to us and to buy what we have to sell to them."

The men landed and cut down trees and built a log store, or trading post. They built some log houses to live in. And they built a strong fence around everything so that they would be safer if Native Americans attacked.

Some traders cheated the Native Americans. This made the Native Americans so angry that they sometimes attacked the traders with bows and arrows and tried to make them go away.

But let's say these traders didn't cheat the Native Americans. So the Native Americans brought valuable furs to the trading post and traded them for

guns and bullets, animal traps, and blankets and food. The men at the trading post sent the furs down-river to the big cities by the ocean and brought back more and more things to trade with the Native Americans for more and more furs--fox, coon, squirrel, skunk, bear, and especially beaver.

One day a man came and built a mill by the river to grind wheat and corn. Now the people who lived there could have fresh flour and cornmeal. Another man came who knew how to make leather from animal skins, and shoes for people and harnesses for horses. Another man came who knew how to fix broken guns and even make new ones. He also knew how to put iron shoes on horses. Someone else came who knew how to weave cloth and make clothes for people. And all the time, more people were coming and cutting down trees and starting gardens and farms.

Finally, there were enough people there at the place where the rivers met that they built a school, a church, and a post office . . . and later a man built a bank.

More and more boats were traveling on the river now; even steamboats. Finally, a road was built through the woods all the way from the ocean to that town where the rivers met. Now big wagons came rolling, loaded with things for people to buy, and loaded with people who wanted to stay and live in that new country, which wasn't so wild anymore.

Railroad tracks were built and travelers started coming to the town where the rivers met. This made it easy for settlers to receive supplies and to travel.

The place was picked too, because the soil was so good for growing crops. The Cache La Poudre nearby would furnish irrigation water. Logs for making lumber could be floated down from the mountains.

The town is still there today, only now it is full of automobiles and buildings. The town is called Greeley.