

## *From Recollections of Harriet L. Noble (1824)*

One of countless women who took part in the westward movement after the War of 1812, Harriet L. Noble later described her family's migration from New York to Michigan, then a sparsely populated territory, and the burdens pioneer life placed on women.

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My husband was seized with the mania, and accordingly made preparation to start and . . . we started about the 20th of September, 1824, for Michigan. . . . As we approached Detroit, the "Cantonment" with the American flag floating on its walls, was decidedly the most interesting of any part of the town; for a city it was certainly the most filthy, irregular place I had ever seen. . . . I said to myself, "if this be a Western city, give me a home in the woods." . . .

We passed two log houses between this and Ann Arbor. About the middle of the afternoon we found ourselves at our journey's end—but what a prospect? There were some six or seven log huts occupied by as many inmates as could be crowded into them. . . . We lived in this way until our husbands got a log house raised and the roof on. . . . We sold out and bought again ten miles west of Ann Arbor, a place which suited us better. . . . My husband and myself were four days building it. I suppose most of my lady friends would think a woman quite out of "her legitimate sphere" in turning mason, but I was not at all particular what kind of labor I performed, so we were only comfortable and provided with the necessaries of life. . . .

I am not of a desponding disposition, nor often low-spirited, and having left New York to make Michigan my home, I had no idea of going back, or being very unhappy. Yet the want of society, of church privileges, and in fact almost every thing that makes life desirable, would often make me sad in spite of all effort to the contrary. . . .

When I look back upon my life, and see the ups and downs, the hardships and privations I have been called upon to endure, I feel no wish to be young again. I was in the prime of life when I came to Michigan—only twenty-one, and my husband was thirty-three. Neither of us knew the reality of hardship. Could we have known what it was to be pioneers in a new country, we should never have had the courage to come, but I am satisfied that with all the disadvantages of raising a family in a new country, there is a consolation in knowing that our children are prepared to brave the ills of life, I believe, far better than they would have been had we never left New York.