



The Struggles for Freedom on the Missouri/Kansas Border

Extraordinary events in the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) forever changed America. In the nineteenth century, the nation turned its eyes to the Missouri/Kansas border, where peoples with diverse definitions of freedom collided, inciting and fueling the Civil War. The impact of these events is forever woven into the nation's fabric.

Shaping the Frontier:

For the half million pioneers who traveled on the Santa Fe, California, Mormon, and Oregon Trails, the Missouri/Kansas border was the jumping off point. In this place where river travel ended, traders, miners, and emigrants purchased provisions and prepared for long overland treks. As they traveled west, many began to see the "permanent" Indian frontier beyond Missouri's western border as an obstacle to Manifest Destiny.

Missouri/Kansas Border War:

When Kansas was opened for settlement in 1854, a border war ensued, capturing the nation's attention. The Kansas-Nebraska Act nullified the uneasy balance established by the Missouri Compromise and left the territory's future slave status in the hands of settlers. The stakes were high for both sides. The violence of the Missouri/Kansas Border War ushered in the Civil War, consumed the region in bloody conflict through war's end, and devastated communities on both sides of the border.

Enduring Struggles for Freedom:

The nation's struggle for freedom did not end with the Civil War. Though the war eliminated clashes over geography, efforts to break down society's barriers continue. Since the Civil War, this place has inspired national policies and ongoing efforts to secure equal freedoms for all Americans.

Freedom's Frontier provides new opportunities for visitors and residents to explore the evolving ideal and fundamental American value of FREEDOM.