Week 1 Colonial Roads (January 29, 2018)
For the first 100 years after original settlement, the U.S. remained a green wilderness. Settlers looked east, to the sea, linking them to mother England. There were only few Indian trails inland through the vast forests and the Appalachian range provided a stern barrier. Military action with the native tribes, the French, and eventually against the English carved out the few roads of colonial times.

Week 2 Great Wagon Road (February 5, 2018)
The Great Wagon Road opened a new chapter in the development of our nation. It led tens of thousands of English, Scot-Irish and Germanic settlers into newly claimed lands. Settlers, Indian traders, soldiers and missionaries all traveled this inland route, farmed the fertile lands along it, and shared in the abundance of its natural wildlife. They left a wealth of recorded history and sustained several armies fighting to create our democracy.

Week 3 Across the Appalachians (February 12, 2018)
Daniel Boone’s establishment of a Wilderness Trail through the Cumberland Gap opened Kentucky/Tennessee for settlement pushing the native tribes ever westward. The National Road following Braddock’s military road through Maryland/SW Pennsylvania into Ohio was extended through Ohio (1828), then Indiana (1832), and finally St. Louis (1838). The Lewis & Clark and Zebulon Pike expeditions into the Louisiana Purchase lands west of the Mississippi fueled the push westward.

Week 4 Canals & Rivers (February 19, 2018)
The completion of New York’s Erie Canal (1825) and the Ohio/Erie Canal System (1834) created a link for an inland waterway connecting the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River System. The Canal allowed goods to travel from Ohio down to the Gulf of Mexico and from Cleveland on Lake Erie to Buffalo and from there to the east coast. This canal system was funded, designed and constructed by New York financiers, engineers and the Irish immigrant labor gangs. This interstate water transportation infrastructure established a national economic system for the young Nation.

Week 5 Land Office/Bounty Lands (February 26, 2018)
Nothing drove the creation of our nation more than the acquisition of land. Early land speculation drove colonials inland. The creation of land companies lured settlers ever west to settle along fertile river valleys. Military bounty lands in payment for soldiers’ service to the country helped populate states west of the Appalachians. And, the Homestead Act of 1862 populated the Great Palins of the Midwest after the Civil War.

Week 6 Oregon/California Trail (March 5, 2018)
“None started but the brave, none got through but the strong.” Join us for a pictorial journey on the famed Oregon Trail to the West with readings from personal diaries and letters from those who made the trip and survived.