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DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN 1840 AND 1850

I loved my village, my corn-fields, and my people. I fought for them. They are now yours. I have looked upon the Mississippi River since I was a child. I love the great river. I have always dwelt upon its banks. I look upon it now and am sad. I shake hands with you. We are now friends — *Black Hawk* to his white captors.



Savannah, first steamship to cross the Atlantic.

Introduction.—While, during the administration of Tyler and Polk, the United States was extending its boundaries to the Pacific, pioneers were rapidly developing new communities in the West and building up new States. In this chapter the chief aim will be to give an account of

Western development between 1840 and 1850.

194. Cheap Lands and Immigration.—In 1841 Congress passed the Preëmption Law. This law reduced the price of public lands from \$2 an acre (p. 207) to \$1.25 an acre, and provided that after the settler had resided on his land for six months and had made certain improvements upon it he could secure a full title to it. The Preëmption Law thus encouraged Western development by offering settlers land at an extremely low price and on very favorable terms.

The growth of the West was also greatly assisted by a tide of immigration that poured into the United States between 1840 and 1850. By 1840 steamships were making regular trips across the Atlantic, and foreigners could come to our shores in comfort and at little expense. Thousands came from Ireland because of a terrible famine (in 1846) due to the failure of the potato crop. Thousands of Germans came because they were discontented