

Long Trails

Toward New Horizons

Book I in the Lonely Trails Saga

Paperback is Available Now and
the eBook is going Live on
July 29, 2026!!



Read more . . .

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Welcome!

“Welcome to the Lonely Trails Saga. This sampler offers a glimpse into the Coulter family’s journey west — a story of courage, kinship, and the promise of new horizons. Like so many long trails before and since, this journey begins with a new dream born out of tragedy.”

THE MOVE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

AWI • OLD BRANDS Westerns & More



A Nation Ready for New Horizons

Discouraged, desolate, fractured, and ready for any glimmer of hope, many post–Civil War families turned their eyes westward to join the pioneers seeking new horizons. They had all faced their measure of hardship — soldiers forged to a new level of “tough” in battle, and families waiting anxiously for loved ones who’d gone off to war.

Between **3 and 4 million men** served in the American Civil War, with the Union enlisting roughly **2.1 million soldiers** and the Confederacy fielding between **750,000 and 1.2 million**. The human cost was staggering: modern estimates place total deaths between **620,000 and 750,000 Americans**, nearly **2% of the entire U.S. population**. The Union lost about **360,000 men**, including **110,000 killed in action** and **224,000 to disease**, while the Confederacy suffered around **258,000 deaths**, with **94,000 killed in battle** and **164,000 lost to illness**. Another **469,000 soldiers across both armies were wounded**.

These numbers shaped the national psyche. Every family carried scars — physical, emotional, or both — and when the guns finally fell silent, thousands of households looked westward for a chance to begin again.

After Gettysburg — A Soldier Comes Home

A month after he entered the field hospital, Adam Coulter was discharged from the Union Army. The Minié ball that ripped through the muscle in his left thigh took its “pound of flesh” with it and left him awkwardly and painfully stitched back together. An inch closer into his leg and the bone would have shattered into fragments, and he would have lost his leg to the surgeons’ grisly tools.

Others had died from wounds far less serious than his. Adam knew he was lucky; at least, everyone told him he was, although all he felt at present was weak and homesick. He wanted to go home to Sarah and his children. He wanted to pick up where he left off... holding his young wife, looking into her hauntingly beautiful brown eyes. In the safety and warmth of his own

home he could leave the ugliness of war far behind. Sarah would help him do that; she was the only medicine he needed now.

And then, at a courthouse in Appomattox, Virginia, it was over.

The Westward Decision

“Adam! Do you know what this means, lad! This means we can go west now!” Jack fairly shouted in his enthusiasm.

The instant joy Sarah felt vanished.

“Adam!” Sarah backed away in disbelief and confusion. “What are you saying, Jack? Adam?” She looked from her husband to Jack Flynn, both men flushed with excitement.

“Sarah, this is what we’ve been waiting for! Don’t you see? The time is right. We can be a part of history! We can help open up a whole new territory!”

“Adam, have you lost your mind?” Sarah shook loose his grasp and stepped back. “Our farm, everything we’ve built here! Are we just going to walk away from it all for... for what? For a savage land we know nothing about? Adam! I won’t! I can’t...”

Decisions made, wagons packed with belongings, they migrated — becoming ever-increasing members of wagon trains moving in slow, serpentine motion toward the setting sun. The Coulters, Schulmeyers, and Bordens are a fictional microcosm of those who went — and their stories only begin on the National Road to Independence, Missouri.



The Trail Ahead

Follow the Coulter family as young Dan partners with two new friends: Wade Oliver, already a man of the West, and Silas “Sy” Jessup, a hardened youth coming into his own with nerves of steel forged on the timberline. Their disparate backgrounds blend into legendary men of the Santa Fe Trail who stop at nothing to see justice done.

Saddled, geared, and provisioned for the trail, the three young men stood together holding their horses.

In a tough, awkward goodbye, Dan removed his hat and spoke.

“Mrs. Schulmeyer, Mrs. Borden, Ma... we will find her and get her home to her pa. I’ll not leave her out there fearing for her life.”

They mounted.

“We’ll drag their bodies somewhere off the trail, Sven. Leave ’em ta rot in the sun. I’ll promise you that,” said Wade.

Sven nodded.

“All of you, come home safe. Son, I will see you at the homestead,” Adam said with a hitch in his voice....

“You must know that you three are becoming legends in your own time here on the trail!” Captain Bowman said with a proud smile.

Begin the Journey

Long Trails is the first book in the Lonely Trails Saga — a tale of families bonding through tragedy in a wild, unfamiliar landscape. It is the story of three young men coming into their own on a long trail of adventure, danger, and destiny — of strong men and courageous women, and of children growing up in a wonderful, wild, and often dangerous West.

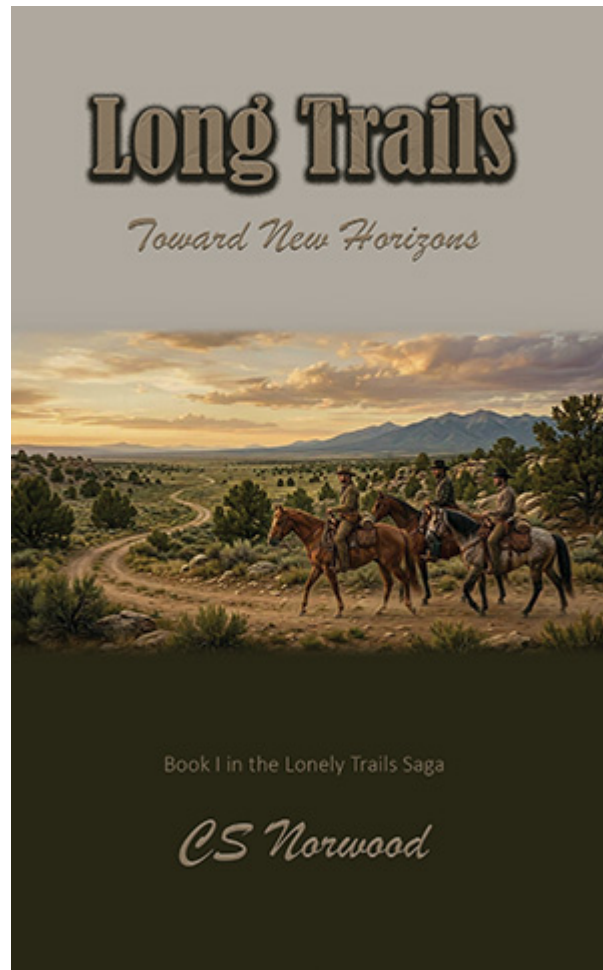
Long Trails does not disappoint.

Call to Action

Ready to ride west?

Follow the Coulter family into the heart of the American frontier. Visit the official AWI Author Page: CS Norwood





Next Steps

Thank you for riding along the *Long Trails* journey. Every reader who joins us helps keep the spirit of the frontier alive — one story, one trail, one heart at a time.

If you'd like to stay connected, follow AWI • OLD BRANDS Westerns & More on Facebook for updates, behind-the-scenes notes, and glimpses of the next adventures. You can also join our mailing list to receive early previews and special releases.

The saga continues with Book II – *Far Trails* and Book III – *Lonely Trails*, where the Coulter family's story deepens across the wide plains and into the heart of the American West.

Your support means the world to us — thank you for reading, sharing, and helping these stories find their way home.

Till we meet again on the trail...

— *CS Norwood* & AWI • OLD BRANDS

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Table of Contents

[THE MOVE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR](#)

[AWI • OLD BRANDS Westerns & More](#)

[A Nation Ready for New Horizons](#)

[After Gettysburg — A Soldier Comes Home](#)

[The Westward Decision](#)

[The Trail Ahead](#)

[Begin the Journey](#)

[Call to Action](#)