One generation of the Burns family, settled in southern Missouri when the Civil War broke out, had its house burned, its cattle driven off, and its grain stolen by marauding Yankee soldiers. Mart Burns, a mere boy at the time, suffered from the violence of the war and tasted the bitterness of Reconstruction. When he arrived at manhood his solution was to go West, where so many of the disinherited had gone. Here he was to fight a war against nature and win out.

The Pfosts had been pioneers for generations. So when Isaac and Margrette Pfost started from Missouri on the Oregon Trail, they were merely fulfilling the destiny of their generation. Their story is the heart-rending day-by-day fight of the average pioneer.

From the experiences of the Burnses and the Pfosts, her forebears, Apal A. Friedline has written a story of enduring truth and interest.

The story of America cannot be told in the experiences of a single generation. Rather, it is a saga extending over a long period of time a drama of fortitude and hardship, hope and enterprise. Out of the lives of her forebears Apal A. Friedline has drawn those episodes which show the finest American stock in the role of pioneer and settler, emigrant and pillar of established society. From Virginia to early Missouri, and from Missouri to the unconquered desert soil of Idaho these people moved in their historic course. Little realizing that their experiences were to become the dramatic pages of history, the American pioneers represent the highest reach of our democratic way of life. Their story is full of the grandeur that makes an epic, but it is tinctured with the homely events that make a story warm and human.