Plotting America's Past: Fenimore Cooper And The Leatherstocking Tales

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The Leatherstocking Tales is a series of five novels by American writer James Fenimore Cooper, set in the eighteenth century era of development in the primarily former Iroquois areas in central New York. Each novel features Natty Bumppo, a frontiersman known to European-American settlers as "Leatherstocking," "The Pathfinder," and "the trapper." Native Americans call him "Deerslayer," "La Longue Carabine" ("Long Rifle" in French), and "Hawkeye." American readers couldn’t get enough of the Leatherstocking saga (collected in two Library of America volumes) and, fourteen years after he portrayed the death of Natty Bumppo in The Prairie, Cooper brought him back in The Pathfinder, or The Inland Sea (1841). During the Seven Years War, just after the events narrated in The Last of the Mohicans, Natty brings the daughter of a British sergeant to her father’s station on the Great Lakes, where the French and their Indian allies are plotting a treacherous ambush. Here, for the first time, he falls in love with a woman, before Cooper manages brin The Leatherstocking Tales, series of five novels by James Fenimore Cooper, published between 1823 and 1841. The novels constitute a saga of 18th-century life among Indians and white pioneers on the New York State frontier through their portrayal of the adventures of the main character, Natty. Mark Twain mocked it (and The Pathfinder) in “Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offences.” This article was most recently revised and updated by Kathleen Kuiper, Senior Editor. Learn More in these related Britannica articles: James Fenimore Cooper: Novels. The first of the renowned Leatherstocking Tales, The Pioneers (1823), followed and adhered to the successful formula of The Spy, reproducing its basic thematic conflicts and utilizing family traditions once again.