

# Going West

**Grade Level:** Second

**Presented by:** Melanie Hieber, Lisa Chase, Kathie Youtsler, Inwood Elementary, Winter Haven, Florida

**Length of Unit:** Four Lessons and Culminating Activity

## I. ABSTRACT

Through building covered wagons, working with United States maps, reading about pioneer life, and writing about Native American experiences, the students will gain an understanding of life during westward expansion in the United States. Students will enjoy learning about the hardships of westward expansion in the United States by discussing, using maps, and creating their own wagon for a wagon train. Students will also use clay to create two early forms of travel (steamboat and railroad), become a Native American for a day, and discover how our nation grew during these early years.

## II. OVERVIEW

In this unit, the students will focus on the need for westward expansion in the United States due to the flood of pioneers arriving in America during this time. They will review the geography of the land. Students will also learn about Robert Fulton's steamboat and the invention of the railroad. Another topic core to this westward discussion is the effect of westward expansion on the Native Americans. Finally, a discussion will be held on the effect of our nation's growth after the Mexican War.

## III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. Bailey, Thomas and David Kennedy. The American Pageant: A History of the Republic Volume II. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987.

Hirsch, E.D. Jr. What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know. New York: Dell Publishing, 1991. (pg. 134-139)

Kelly, Kate and Anne Zeman. Everything You Need to Know About American History. New York: Scholastic, Incorporated, 1994.

B. Before beginning this unit, remind and discuss briefly with the students why they think so many people were coming to America, and why this country was so different from other countries during those times. Remind them of the Revolutionary War, The Louisiana Purchase, James Madison and the Constitution, and the War of 1812. These topics will help build background and keep the students on track.

## IV. RESOURCES

A list of key teacher resources is above (BACKGROUND INFORMATION). Other important literature is listed in the *Bibliography*.

Milliken, Linda. Frontier American Activity Book. Dana Point: Edupress, 1990.

### **Florida Sunshine State Standards Met:**

S.S.A.1.1.1 Compares everyday life in different places and times and understands that people, places, and things change over time -- Lessons 1-4

S.S.A.4.1.1 knows significant individuals in United States history to 1880 -- Lessons 1-4

S.S.A.4.1.4 Understands the changes that occurred in people's lives when they moved from faraway places to the U.S. -- Lesson 1,2,3

## V. LESSONS

### Lesson One: Wagons Ho!

- A. In this lesson, the students will discover the hardships of westward expansion through discussion with teacher and peers, exploring the terrain of the United States through maps, and finally, building a covered wagon for the wagon train.
- B. Materials:  
Teacher will need: My First Little House Book-Going West, by Laura Ingalls Wilder (see bibliography), large map of the United States, and What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.  
Students will need: a milk carton, glue, 4 wagon wheel pasta, white paper (8 1/2" X 4"), and craft sticks (approximately 15, 12 long and 6 halves)
- C. Background for this lesson can be found in What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. "A Few Settlers Move West" pages 134-135.
- D. Vocabulary: pioneer, Louisiana Purchase, Appalachian Mountains, Mississippi River. Discuss other vocabulary as students suggest unknown words.
- E. 1. Introduce the pioneer unit by reading My First Little House Book-Going West by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Discuss **similarities and differences** of life today. Create a Venn Diagram on the board (skill: compare/contrast).  
2. Let students suggest unknown vocabulary based on reading the book. Make sure to discuss what students think a pioneer is.  
3. Discuss with students all BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE. Use the map to point out the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. Read and discuss "A Few Settlers Move West" pages 134-135 in What Your Second Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. Remind the students that President Jefferson, our third president, purchased land from France for a great deal in 1803 (before the war). This was called the Louisiana Purchase. Explain that this made our country twice as big. So many people from Europe were coming to America that many people moved west over the Appalachians (point out on map) to explore the newer land. They had heard that food grew easily between the mountains and the Mississippi River. They had also heard of many animals in this area. The people traveled through forests and up mountains. It was a long journey since families traveled in horse-drawn covered wagons. Explain that everything they owned was packed and carried in that wagon. Discuss: What kind of things do you think the people packed in their wagons? What would you have to leave behind? What kind of hardships do you think the people faced while traveling?
- F. Assessment Activity: After reading about going west and discussing all background knowledge, tell children that we will make our own covered wagons.  
STEP 1 - Cut long side and short top (drinking area) off milk carton.  
STEP 2 - Glue craft sticks to each side (6 long per side) and back of milk carton (6 halves). Front of carton is open.  
STEP 3 - Glue white paper to inside of milk carton to make cover.  
STEP 4 - Glue wagon wheel pasta (4) to each side to create four wheels. **TIP:** Each time any gluing is done, the child should press and hold for 20 counts. This is a teacher directed activity and should be completed step by step with the children.  
SEE ATTACHED SHEET for more detailed instructions and sketch (Appendix A).

**Extension: (Optional)** Have students create a track with obstacles that pioneers would have faced on their trip west (mountains, animals, bandits, lakes, rivers, lack of food, rough terrain, etc.). Allow them to use their wagons to make a wagon train and travel west across their track. This is another excellent opportunity for discussing how pioneers could have solved their problems or perished.

### **Lesson Two: Inventions of Steamboat and Railroad**

- A. In this lesson, the students will understand the need for and results of faster travel through the invention of the steamboat and the railroad. The students will learn that Robert Fulton was the inventor of the steamboat.
- B. **Materials:** Teacher will need: large map of the United States, What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.  
Students will need: laminated map of the U.S. (Appendix B)-per pair, clay or play-doh (optional activity - paper, pencil, crayons)
- C. Background for this lesson can be found in What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., "Boats and Trains" pages 135-136.
- D. **Vocabulary:** steamboat, railroad, engineer, canal, invention
- E. 1. Review what the children know about traveling in covered wagons (took a long time, bumpy ride, everything owned in the wagon, robbery by bandits, etc.).  
2. Discuss: Many people died going west in their covered wagons. There had to be another way; and there was! Canals. An artist and engineer, named **Robert Fulton** invented a new kind of boat that was run by a steam engine. It was called the steam boat. These boats used wood or coal as fuel to make steam and to run the engines. These steamboats made travel easier and quicker. Instead of roads, canals were dug for boats to travel to more places. Canals are man made rivers used to connect larger bodies of water. The Erie Canal was built not too long after the War of 1812. This canal made it possible to travel from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi (use the large map to point out areas mentioned).  
3. Another terrific invention was the railroad. Steam was also used to make the trains move. The early railroads covered their passengers with coal and smoke, but this travel was a lot faster than covered wagons.
- F. **Assessment Activity:** Students will work in pairs. Each pair will be given a laminated map of the United States (Appendix B). They will locate the Mississippi River and Lake Erie, as mentioned in the lesson. Then, they will be given play-doh or clay. Have students create the two inventions that made travel easier (steamboat and railroad). They may put their creations on the map on the appropriate place (steamboat - close to Mississippi, etc.). Circulate and ask questions about inventors, how they think these inventions changed the world, etc. (skill: map skills).  
**Optional Activity:** Write several inventions on the board (steamboat, car, bike, railroad, and jet). Give each student a piece of paper. Fold the paper in half. Each student should choose and draw the two inventions that made travel easier during the early 1800's. They should write a sentence under each picture telling what they learned about each invention, i.e. Robert Fulton invented the steamboat that could have taken passengers along the Mississippi River (skill: comprehension).

### **Lesson Three: Westward Expansion and the Native Americans**

- A. The students will understand the effects of westward expansion on the Native Americans.
- B. Materials: Teacher will need: large map of the United States, What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., The Mud Pony by Caron Lee Cohen, pictures of Native Americans in traditional clothing  
Students will need: paper, pencil, construction paper, paper bags, clothing from home (if available)
- C. Background for this lesson can be found in What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. "A Storm", page 136.
- D. Vocabulary: review pioneer, discuss new vocabulary as children suggest
- E. 1. Introduce this lesson by reading The Mud Pony by Caron Lee Cohen. Discuss the story and focus on why the Native American people had to keep moving (they were following the buffalo). You may want to complete a KWL Chart on what your students know about Native Americans.
2. Discuss how the Native Americans used the land for their shelter, food, and existence. Ask the students what they think the Native Americans thought of the inventions of the steamboat and railroad. Why?
3. With these new, faster means of transportation, more people came flooding into America. The people who traveled west were called pioneers. The word pioneers came from a term used in the Army. Pioneers were brave soldiers who went ahead of the others to make paths and roads for the rest of the Army to follow. That is exactly what the pioneers did: they went west to explore new land and others followed.
4. As pioneers moved west, they forced many Native Americans off their land. Some tribes were removed from their lands by the government and were sent to "Indian Territory." They weren't allowed to leave these territories, and many were hungry. They were forced to live in small areas where their supplies and food would run out quickly.
- F. **Assessment Activity:** Have each child pretend that he/she is a Native American during the time many pioneers were moving west. Have students write how they would feel if they were removed from their home and sent to live in another, unknown place, where there was little food. They can write about their struggles with the pioneers and what happened to their families. The teacher should dress as a Native American and model this activity for the students. Students can use construction paper, paper bags (for vests), and clothing from home (if available) to dress up like a Native Americans. Students can read their paper to the class, describing what happened to "them" when the pioneers moved onto their land.
- Optional Activity:** Assign half of the class to be Native Americans and the other half to be Pioneers. Both can dress in traditional clothing and write about their struggles (as mentioned above). In this activity, students can **compare/contrast and classify** the struggles of each group.

#### **Lesson Four: War with Mexico**

- A. In this lesson, the students will understand the effects of the Mexican War on the expansion of the United States.
- B. Materials: Teacher will need: large map of the United States, What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., books on Mexican War, Davy Crockett  
Students will need: copy of Appendix C (map of U.S.), pencil, and crayons

- C. Background for this lesson can be found in What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., "Lone Star State," "Remember the Alamo," "After the Mexican War," pages 137-139
- D. Vocabulary: review vocabulary as children suggest
- E. 1. Remember how, many years ago, Mexico used to own some parts of the United States including Texas. Many Americans had moved into Texas. The Mexican government didn't mind at first because Americans paid them taxes, but ultimately too many Americans moved into Texas. The Mexican president was very strict and the people felt like a king was ruling them again. (**Compare** to England and Revolutionary War). They (the Texans) didn't like this and wanted to be free of Mexico.
2. There was a battle between the Texans and Mexicans. It was called the Alamo (once was a small Mexican church). **Davy Crockett** fought in this war. Mexico's army was much larger and, although the Texans fought courageously, only five people were not killed. The Mexican President ordered his generals to kill the remaining five. The Texans were furious about this killing, so they surprised the Mexican army and captured the President of Mexico. Soon after, Texas became a state in America.
3. The Mexican government was still angry and tried to attack Texas. The U.S. and Mexico went to war again. This time, the Americans captured the capital of Mexico City and the war was over. So, the U.S. claimed Mexico's lands. They were California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Now the United States stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This made the U.S. three times as big as the thirteen original colonies (states).
- F. **Assessment Activity:** Each child should have a map of the U.S. (Appendix C). It will be labeled as follows: 13 colonies (1803)-green, Louisiana Purchase (1803)-blue, and Mexican claims (1820)-red. Students will color each area a different color and notice the growth of our nation. Discuss: What lands (states) are not yet a part of the United States at this time? (Ex: Florida) On the back of the map, the students can answer this question: Why did the Texans originally go to war with the Mexicans?

## VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

The students have learned much about Westward Expansion in the United States. Have students write a paragraph using this **prompt**: Three interesting things I have learned about Westward Expansion are ... They should illustrate their paragraph. Collect all the papers and create a book of student work on Westward Expansion in the United States.

## VII. HANDOUTS

- A. Appendix A - teacher use only (directions for wagons)
- B. Appendix B - map of United States (laminated)
- C. Appendix C - map of United States after Mexican Claims

## VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adler, David A. Picture Book of Davy Crockett. New York: Holiday House, 1996.
- Bailey, Thomas and David Kennedy. The American Pageant: A History of the Republic Volume II. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987.
- Cohen, Caron Lee. The Mud Pony. New York: Scholastic, 1988.
- Fradin. Pioneers - A New True Book Chicago: Children's Press, 1984.
- Gorsline, Marie. The Pioneers. New York: Random House, 1978.
- Hirsch, Jr. E.D. What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know. New York: Dell Publishing, 1991.

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- Kramer, Sydelle. Wagon Train. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1997.
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- Penner, Lucille Recht. Westward Ho! New York: Random House, 1997.
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls. Christmas in the Big Woods. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls. The First Four Years. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls. Little House in the Big Woods. New York: Harper & Row, 1953.
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls. Little House on the Prairie. New York: Harper Collins, 1953.
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls. My First Little House Book-Going West. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls. Prairie Day. New York: Harper Collins, 1997.

## Appendix A

### COVERED WAGON ART ACTIVITY

#### MATERIALS: (per student)

- \* 1 empty half pint milk carton
- \* 15 craft sticks
- \* white paper
- \* 4 wagon wheel pasta (may substitute quarter traced on tagboard)
- \* glue (or hot glue)
- \* scissors

#### Advance preparation:

**Milk cartons** - Tops should be completely opened, wash out, and let dry; have a school volunteer rinse them out with bleach water or you can just touch up spots with bleach and Q-tip. If bleach is used, be sure to rinse milk cartons out again.

**Craft sticks** - Cut three craft sticks in half for each student.

**White paper** - Cut in 8 1/2 by 4 inch pieces.

**Wagon wheel pasta** - difficult to find sometimes (may substitute tagboard wheels) \*Trace a quarter, 4 times, on a piece of tagboard for each student. Show students how to draw lines in to look like spokes.

#### Step By Step Instructions

1. Cut the tops off the milk cartons. Tell students to cut in the folds/creases/or on the lines. (Should have 4 sides, and bottom left.) Pick a side - such as the nutrition information panel - have the students cut down the two sides and across the bottom. (Should have three sides, and bottom.)

Do steps 2 - 4 with milk carton resting on the "middle panel", (opening up):

2. Glue 6 half craft sticks horizontally to the bottom (outside of milk carton). Be sure to have students place the sticks touching each other. Students will need to press and hold sticks in place for a short time.

3. Glue 6 whole craft sticks, touching each other, to one side. Be sure the one set of ends are even with the half craft sticks. The opposite set of ends will hang over the edge of the milk carton. Again, students will need to press firmly and hold sticks in place for a short time. *This is a good "BUDDY" time for some students.*

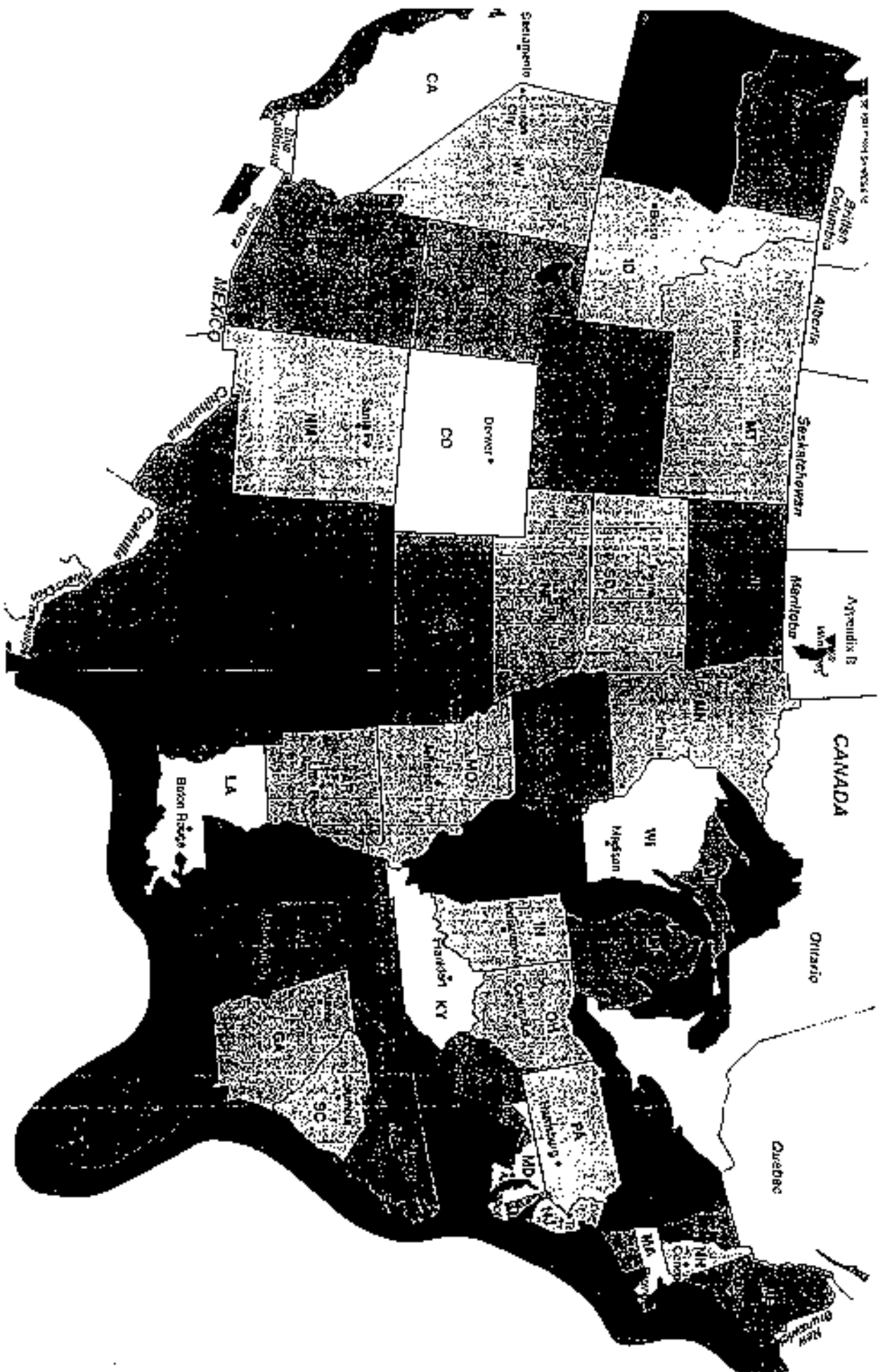
4. Repeat step 3 for the remaining side.

5. Have students write their name on the white piece of paper, discreetly. Glue both 4 inch edges of paper to the inside of the milk carton (4 inch sides), creating their wagons "cover"(an arch shape).

6. Glue two wagon wheel pasta on each side to create four wheels. (Hint: Glue one side, allow time to dry before attempting to glue the other side whether you use wagon wheel pasta or tagboard.) \*Cut tagboard wheels out, draw spokes in before gluing.

**Your covered wagon is finished and will actually stand on its wheels!**





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