

Westward Expansion

The American settlers expand west following the Civil War



Lindsay Verwys
Concord Academy Boyne

Summer 2012

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/psbib:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(p14567\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/psbib:@field(DOCID+@lit(p14567)))
The David Hilton family near Weissert, Custer County, Nebraska.
Nebraska State Historical Society- [Collections and Prints](#)
Reproduction Number: RG2608.PH000000-003535

Why would you leave your home and all you knew to move to the Great American Desert? Would you want to live in a house made of dirt? During this study we will look at reason why settlers felt the need to move west. We will look at the struggles they encounter as well as the great barriers they have to over come to be successful in their new livelihood. Primary documents will aid us during this discovery, and you the student will analyze the detail of these images.

[Overview/ Materials/LOC Resources/Standards/ Procedures/Evaluation/Rubric/Handouts/Extension](#)

Overview		Back to Navigation Bar
Objectives	Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the history of the Moving West through analysis of primary source photographs, documents, and images. • Research the era 1870-1910 by looking at primary documents • Review Census data and use tables and graphs • Use a variety of mediums to learn: writing, reading, art, etc. 	
Recommended time frame	Approximately 100 minutes	
Grade level	8 th - 10 th grade	
Curriculum fit	US History	

Materials	<p>Activity 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images 1-3 • Blank map of the US • Colored Pencils • Template 1 <p>Activity 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images: 4-6 • Template 2 <p>Activity 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image 7 • Handout- Census <p>Activity 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5x8 flashcards- 1 for each student • image 8 <p>Activity 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • images 9-13 • Handout- Template 3 <p>Activity 6: Extension Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image 14 • Citation for images
-----------	---

Michigan State Learning Standards [Back to Navigation Bar](#)

	<p>USH 6.1 Growth of an Industrial and Urban America <i>Explain the causes and consequences – both positive and negative – of the Industrial Revolution and America’s growth from a predominantly agricultural, commercial, and rural nation to a more industrial and urban nation between 1870 and 1930.</i></p> <p>USH 6.1.1 Factors in the American Industrial Revolution – Analyze the factors that enabled the United States to become a major industrial power, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizational “revolution” (e.g., development of corporations and labor organizations) • advantages of physical geography • increase in labor through immigration and
--	---

	<p>migration</p> <p>USH 6.1.4 Population Changes – Use census data from 1790-1940 to describe changes in the composition, distribution, and density of the American population and analyze their causes, including immigration, the Great Migration, and urbanization.</p>
--	---

Procedures	Back to Navigation Bar
-------------------	--

	<p>Essential Questions for discussion to begin class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does census data tell us about changing demographics in America from 1790 to 1940? • Why would Americans want to move west? What are the benefits? • Will Americans encounter struggles or is life better in the west than the life they left behind? <p>Activity 1: (20 minutes) Mapping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the Mining • Use a blank map of the US to map the types of things that are mined in the West • Evaluate the various mining cities- use template 1 <p>Activity 2: (30 minutes) Caravans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer the who, what, why, when, where, how according to the images on why settlers were moving west • Use all images to answer these questions <p>Activity 3: (15 minutes) Census</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the US Census from 1880 and 1900. • Use the Census Handout to evaluate the document <p>Activity 4: (5 minutes and homework assignment) Postcard/Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the application from image 8 • Write your own postcard to the application office • Design the front of the postcard with an image based on this lesson <p>Activity 5: (25 minutes) Sod House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print images 9-13 and post around the room
--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide students into groups and have them move around the room evaluating the photos • Using template 3, evaluate the 5 photos of the sod houses • Come back for class discussion <p>Activity 6: (10 minutes +H.W.) Letter Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read letter from image 14 • Discuss in class- leads to evaluation
--	---

Evaluation Back to Navigation Bar	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a summative assessment, students will construct a letter home from the viewpoint of a settler who has just moved west. You must include at least 4 primary sources from what we have studied during this unit. Letter home should be in letter format with sources imbedded by use of parenthesis. Letter should be no less than 300 words. Letter should be as accurate to details and history as possible. Unknown information can be researched. Some liberties can be taken to make letter interesting but it should not deter from the true information. This is a document based question assignment

Extension Back to Navigation Bar	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to the Library of Congress that can expand upon the information we have already learned. Find 3 documents that could be added to this lesson. Don't forget to cite your sources.

Historical Background

[Back to Navigation Bar](#)

The nation expanded rapidly, extending by the Age of Jackson to the Mississippi River and beyond. Citizens who moved westward carried with them the ideals of equality and freedom for all white men. Freeman became one of the first to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Homestead Act, a law signed by President Abraham Lincoln on May 20, 1862. At the time of the signing, 11 states had left the Union, and this piece of legislation would continue to have regional and political overtones.

The distribution of Government lands had been an issue since the Revolutionary War. Early methods for allocating unsettled land outside the original 13 colonies were arbitrary and chaotic. Boundaries were established by stepping off plots from geographical landmarks. As a result, overlapping claims and border disputes were common. The Land Ordinance of 1785 finally implemented a standardized system of Federal land surveys that eased boundary conflicts. Using astronomical starting points, territory was divided into a 6-mile square called a township prior to settlement. The township was divided into 36 sections, each measuring 1 square mile or 640 acres each. Sale of public land was viewed as a means to generate revenue for the Government rather than as a way to encourage settlement. Initially, an individual was required to purchase a full section of land at the cost of \$1 per acre for 640 acres. The investment needed to purchase these large plots and the massive amount of physical labor required to clear the land for agriculture was often insurmountable obstacles.

By 1800, the minimum lot was halved to 320 acres, and settlers were allowed to pay in 4 installments, but prices remained fixed at \$1.25 an acre until 1854. That year, federal legislation was enacted establishing a graduated scale that adjusted land prices to reflect the desirability of the lot. Lots that had been on the market for 30 years, for example, were reduced to 12 ½ cents per acre. Soon after, extraordinary bonuses were extended to veterans and those interested in settling the Oregon Territory, making homesteading a viable option for some. But basically, national public-land-use policy made land ownership financially unattainable for most would-be homesteaders.

In 1862, the Homestead Act was passed and signed into law. The new law established a three-fold homestead acquisition process: filing an application, improving the land, and filing for deed of title. Any U.S. citizen, or intended citizen, who had never borne arms against the U.S. Government, could file an application and lay claim to 160 acres of surveyed Government land. For the next 5 years, the homesteader had to live on the land and improve it by building a 12-by-14 dwelling and growing crops. After 5 years, the homesteader could file for his patent (or deed of title) by submitting proof of residency and the required improvements to a local land office.

Local land offices forwarded the paperwork to the General Land Office in Washington, DC, along with a final certificate of eligibility. The case file was examined, and valid claims were granted patent to the land free and clear, except for a small registration fee. Title could also be acquired after a 6-month residency and trivial improvements, provided the claimant paid the government \$1.25 per acre. After the Civil War, Union soldiers could deduct the time they served from the residency requirements.




Some land speculators took advantage of a legislative loophole caused when those drafting the law's language failed to specify whether the 12-by-14 dwelling was to be built in feet or inches. Others hired phony claimants or bought abandoned land. The General Land Office was under funded and unable to hire a sufficient number of investigators for its widely scattered local offices. As a result, overworked and underpaid investigators were often susceptible to bribery.

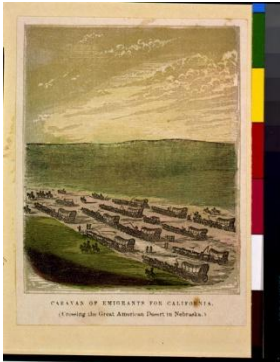

Physical conditions on the frontier presented even greater challenges. Wind, blizzards, and plagues of insects threatened crops. Open plains meant few trees for building, forcing many to build homes out of sod. Limited fuel and water supplies could turn simple cooking and heating chores into difficult trials. Ironically, even the smaller size of sections took its own toll. While 160 acres may have been sufficient for an eastern farmer, it was simply not enough to sustain agriculture on the dry plains, and scarce natural vegetation made raising livestock on the prairie difficult. As a result, in many areas, the original homesteader did not stay on the land long enough to fulfill the claim.




Homesteaders who persevered were rewarded with opportunities as rapid changes in transportation eased some of the hardships. Six months after the Homestead Act was passed, the Railroad Act was signed, and by May 1869, a transcontinental railroad stretched across the frontier. The new railroads provided easy transportation for homesteaders, and railroad companies eager to sell off excess land at inflated prices lured new immigrants westward. The new rail lines provided ready access to manufactured goods and catalog houses like Montgomery Ward offered farm tools, barbed wire, linens, weapons, and even houses delivered via the rails.




Primary Resources from the Library of Congress


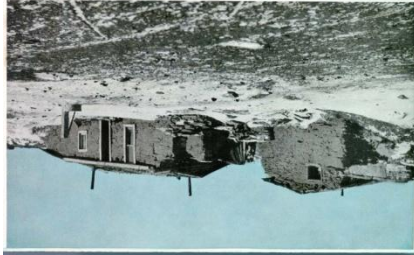
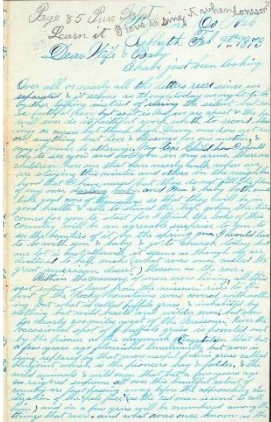
[Back to Navigation Bar](#)

Image/resource- <i>Follow in sequential order</i>	Description	Citation	URL
	<p>West Creek, CO View of the gold mining camp of West Creek, CO in Douglas County. Structures: one and two-story wood frame buildings, log cabin and tents. Snow over landscape. Sign: "Hotel West Creek" and "Grocery Hardware"</p>	<p>Western History/General Department, Denver Public Library</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hawp:@field(NUMBER+@band(codhawp+00170706))</p>
	<p>View of Waldorf Mine and Mill. Waldorf, Clear Creek County, Colorado; shows Argentine Central Railway narrow gauge tracks, switches, water tower and flatbed cars.</p>	<p>Photo taken by John R. Henderson June 21, 1908 and is housed in the Western History/General Department, Denver Public Library</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hawp:@field(NUMBER+@band(codhawp+10013986))</p>
	<p>View overlooking Lead, South Dakota, shows a portion of the Homestake mine in the foreground.</p>	<p>Western History/General Department, Denver Public Library</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hawp:@field(NUMBER+@band(codhawp+10062638))</p>

	<p>Wood engraving of a caravan of emigrants moving to California-moving across the Nebraska desert between 1850-1900.</p>	<p>This photo is from the, "Photocopies of miscellaneous historical lithographs and other graphic representations depicting the role of the pioneers, miners, cattlemen, fortune hunters, etc. in the opening of the western United States" Call Number: LOT 4392 (R) (G) [P&P]</p>	<p>http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/93506241/</p>
	<p>A family poses with the wagon in which they live and travel daily during their pursuit of a homestead, 1886.</p>	<p><i>Family Traveling West.</i> 1866. National Archives, Washington D.C. Web. 22 June 2012. Potter, Lee Ann and Wynell Schamel. "The Homestead Act of 1862." <i>Social Education</i> 61, 6 (October 1997): 359-364.</p>	<p><http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/homestead-act/>.</p>

	<p>The David Hilton family near Weissert, Custer County, Nebraska.</p>	<p><u>Solomon D. Butcher</u></p> <p>1887</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/psbib:@field(DOCID+@lit(p14567))</p>
<p>1880</p>  <p>1900</p> 	<p>Page from 1880 & 1900 Census National Archives and Records Administration Records of the Bureau of the Census Record Group 29</p>	<p>Mueller, Jean West and Wynell Burroughs Schamel. "Little House in the Census: Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder." <i>Social Education</i> 53, 7 (November/December 1989): 451-453</p>	<p><i>US Census. 1880 & 1900.</i> US Census Bureau, Washington D.C. Web. 22 June 2012. <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/wilder/#documents>.</p>
	<p>Daniel Freeman's Homestead Application</p>	<p>Potter, Lee Ann and Wynell Schamel. "The Homestead Act of 1862." <i>Social Education</i> 61, 6 (October 1997): 359-364.</p>	<p>Freeman, Daniel. <i>Application for Homestead.</i> 1863. National Archives, Washington D.C. Web. 22 June 2012. <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/homestead-act/>.</p>

	<p>Apparently deserted sod house, but in relatively good shape, showing door, two windows and stove pipe. It is built in two sections with two different rooflines. To left in background is a windmill. Kansas</p>	<p>Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS- NDSU, Fargo.</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ngp:@field(NUMBER+@band(ndfahult+b009))</p>
	<p>Rear view of apparently abandoned sod house with shingle roof. One window and a stovepipe visible. In distance are power lines. North Dakota</p>	<p>Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS- NDSU, Fargo.</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ngp:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(ndfahult+b019)))+@field(COLLID+ndfa))</p>
	<p>Man (Rudolf Petr?) standing with dog outside of sod house, which has been plastered with stones covering most of the house. It has two windows and a doorway showing. Southwest of White River, South Dakota, built in 1913</p>	<p>Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS- NDSU, Fargo. 1913</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ngp:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(ndfahult+b002)))+@field(COLLID+ndfa))</p>

	<p>Anders Hultstrand sod house, Soper Post Office, Dakota Territory, 1897</p>	<p>Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS-NDSU, Fargo. 1897</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ngp:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(ndfahult+c491)))+@field(COLLID+ndfa))</p>
	<p>The Old LU (Lu Bar) Cow Camp, north Montana, 1884. Two sod buildings, both likely houses. Stovepipes visible on both buildings. Snow on ground and possibly a wooden pump in foreground.</p>	<p>Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS-NDSU, Fargo. 1884</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ngp:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(ndfahult+b022)))+@field(COLLID+ndfa))</p>
	<p>Letter from Uriah W. Oblinger to Mattie V. Oblinger, Ella Oblinger, February 9, 1873</p>	<p>Letter from Uriah W. Oblinger to Mattie V. Oblinger, Ella Oblinger, February 9, 1873</p>	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ps:@field(DOCLD+@lit(1095))</p>

Handouts- Template 1

[Back to Navigation Bar](#)

Name: _____

Mining Towns of the West

Please use the following table to evaluate each photo for the good and the bad. At the end of the evaluation please tell which your favorite is and where you'd like to live.

Photo #	Location	Good	Bad
1			
2			
3			

Handouts- Template 2

[Back to Navigation Bar](#)

Name: _____

5 W's and H- Caravanning West

Use the images provided in class showing the settlers moving west. Answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

1. **Who** is moving west? _____

2. **What** are they bringing with them? _____

3. **What** struggles are they going to face? _____

4. **Where** are they headed? Where did they come from? _____

5. **Why** would they leave their home and what they know? _____

6. **When** is this taking place? _____

7. **How** would you handle this situation? _____

Create your own 5W's H questions below:

WHO: _____

WHAT: _____

WHY: _____

WHEN: _____

WHERE: _____

HOW: _____

Handouts- Census

[Back to Navigation Bar](#)

US Census- Teachers Notes

Instruct students to examine the documents.

(Note: when printed out, the documents are much more legible than they are online, and blank census forms are available from Familytreemaker.com.)

- a. Ask students to figure out the column headings, the number of families represented their place of origin, their level of education, and their economic status.
- b. The [1880 census](#) ^{Note} gives Laura Ingalls Wilder's age as 13; the [1900 census](#) ^{Note} as 32. Both censuses were taken in June. Which is correct? How do you account for the error?

Extended Information:

Using the questions from the 1900 census, direct students to conduct a census of their own households.

- Direct students to compare and contrast the responses to the questions in 1880, 1900, and the census the students made of their households. Discuss with them similarities and differences and ask them to hypothesize explanations and generalizations based on their census information.

US Census- Student Handout

Name: _____

US Census

Answer the following questions looking at both of 1880 and the 1900 census.

1. What are the column headings?
1880
1900
2. How many families are represented?
1880
1900
3. What is their place of origin?
1880
1900
4. What is their level of education?
1880
1900
5. What is their economic status?
1880
1900

Questions based on both censuses.

6. The 1880 census gives Laura Ingalls Wilder's age as 13; the 1900 census as 32. Both censuses were taken in June. Which is correct? How do you account for the error?

3.

Step 3. Questions

A. What questions do the photographs raise in your mind?

B. Where could you find answers to them?

Designed and developed by the Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408

Rubric- for final letter

[Back to Navigation Bar](#)

Letter Home Rubric

Teacher Name:

Student Name: _____

Score: ____/40 ____

CATEGORY	8	6	4	2
Overall impression	Makes a complete and detailed description of the subject matter	Makes a detailed description of most of the subject matter	Makes a detailed description of some of the subject matter	Descriptions are not detailed or complete.
True to History	Accurate representation of photos and primary sources	Accurate information but some falsehoods were evident that detracted from detail	Some historical information but many falsehoods were evident that detracted from detail	Mostly mythical and very little detail that pointed to the historical evidence
Grammar	Little to no errors in spelling and grammar. Paragraphs were logical and letter format was evident	Few errors in spelling and grammar. Paragraphs lacked a solid flow and letter format was evident	Errors were persistent in writing, format was lacking in detail	Little to no formatting Many errors in spelling and grammar
Sources	Lists 4 relevant sources: give the citation of the photo and the URL.	List 3 sources, with few errors in citation and URL	Lists 2-1 relevant sources: give the citation of the photo and the URL.	No quality citation or URL's were given.
Length	300+ words	250-299 words	200-249 words	< 199 words

