

LESSON # 3:

LEAVING HOME FOR THE WEST – Why?

(Grade 8/Social Studies)

Written by Mishelle Hall

Overview of the Lesson: In this lesson, students will research and analyze the desire for land as one of the motives for relocating to the West. This activity is intended to be used with other Social Studies lessons and activities to provide students with a comprehensive study of American Westward Expansion.

Objective: The learner will

- Research, evaluate and analyze the desire for land in the Westward Movement.

TEKS:

(8.6) History. The student understands westward expansion and its effects on the political, economic, and social development of the nation.

(B) explain the political, economic, and social roots of Manifest Destiny.

(8.12) Geography. The student understands the physical characteristics of the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries and how humans adapted to and modified the environment.

(A) analyze how physical characteristics of the environment influenced population distribution, settlement patterns, and economic activities in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries;

(B) describe the consequences of human modification of the physical environment of the United States.

(8.30) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology.

(8.31) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

(8.32) Social studies skills. The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.

Time Required: One to two class periods

Materials Needed:

Transparency of the Sid Richardson Museum painting *The Dry Camp* (1907) by Frederic Remington

NARA Document Analysis Worksheet

NARA Primary Source: The Homestead Act

Butcher Paper

Markers, Map Pencils

Procedure

- Create a transparency of the Sid Richardson Museum painting *The Dry Camp*.



The Dry Camp, Frederic Remington, 1907, Oil on Canvas
Sid Richardson Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

- Using the painting as a visual discovery, let the students discuss the painting. Discussion might include the following questions:
 - Who is in the painting?
 - What is he doing? What might be in the wagon?
 - Describe the location of the painting.
 - Describe the weather.
 - Where might he be going?

This discussion will include land as one of the primary reasons American settlers would choose to leave their homes to move to the unknown west.

- Have your students get into groups. Give each group a copy of the Homestead Act and relevant background information.

To find background information about the Homestead Act, enter a search query at the National Park Service, Homestead National Monument of America, online version on November 2, 2006, available at:

<http://www.nps.gov/home/>

Transcript of Homestead Act (1862)

CHAP. LXXV. —*An Act to secure Homesteads to actual Settlers on the Public Domain.*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That any person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States, or who shall have filed his declaration of intention to become such, as required by the naturalization laws of the United States, and who has never borne arms against the United States Government or given aid and comfort to its enemies, shall, from and after the first January, eighteen hundred and sixty-three, be entitled to enter one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated public lands, upon which said person may have filed a preemption claim, or which may, at the time the application is made, be subject to preemption at one dollar and twenty-five cents, or less, per acre; or eighty acres or less of such unappropriated lands, at two dollars and fifty cents per acre, to be located in a body, in conformity to the legal subdivisions of the public lands, and after the same shall have been surveyed: Provided, That any person owning and residing on land may, under the provisions of this act, enter other land lying contiguous to his or her said land, which shall not, with the land so already owned and occupied, exceed in the aggregate one hundred and sixty acres.

SEC. 2. And be it further enacted, That the person applying for the benefit of this act shall, upon application to the register of the land office in which he or she is about to make such entry, make affidavit before the said register or receiver that he or she is the head of a family, or is twenty-one years or more of age, or shall have performed service in the army or navy of the United States, and that he has never borne arms against the Government of the United States or given aid and comfort to its enemies, and that such application is made for his or her exclusive use and benefit, and that said entry is made for the purpose of actual settlement and cultivation, and not either directly or indirectly for the use or benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever; and upon filing the said affidavit with the register or receiver, and on payment of ten dollars, he or she shall thereupon be permitted to enter the quantity of land specified: Provided, however, That no certificate shall be given or patent issued therefor until the expiration of five years from the date of such entry; and if, at the expiration of such time, or at any time within two years thereafter, the person making such entry; or, if he be dead, his widow; or in case of her death, his heirs or devisee; or in case of a widow making such entry, her heirs or devisee, in case of her death; shall prove by two credible witnesses that he, she, or they have resided upon or cultivated the same for the term of five years immediately succeeding the time of filing the affidavit aforesaid, and shall make affidavit that no part of said land has been alienated, and that he has borne true allegiance

to the Government of the United States; then, in such case, he, she, or they, if at that time a citizen of the United States, shall be entitled to a patent, as in other cases provided for by law: And provided, further, That in case of the death of both father and mother, leaving an Infant child, or children, under twenty-one years of age, the right and fee shall ensure to the benefit of said infant child or children; and the executor, administrator, or guardian may, at any time within two years after the death of the surviving parent, and in accordance with the laws of the State in which such children for the time being have their domicil, sell said land for the benefit of said infants, but for no other purpose; and the purchaser shall acquire the absolute title by the purchase, and be entitled to a patent from the United States, on payment of the office fees and sum of money herein specified.

SEC. 3. And be it further enacted, That the register of the land office shall note all such applications on the tract books and plats of, his office, and keep a register of all such entries, and make return thereof to the General Land Office, together with the proof upon which they have been founded.

SEC. 4. And be it further enacted, That no lands acquired under the provisions of this act shall in any event become liable to the satisfaction of any debt or debts contracted prior to the issuing of the patent therefor.

SEC. 5. And be it further enacted, That if, at any time after the filing of the affidavit, as required in the second section of this act, and before the expiration of the five years aforesaid, it shall be proven, after due notice to the settler, to the satisfaction of the register of the land office, that the person having filed such affidavit shall have actually changed his or her residence, or abandoned the said land for more than six months at any time, then and in that event the land so entered shall revert to the government.

SEC. 6. And be it further enacted, That no individual shall be permitted to acquire title to more than one quarter section under the provisions of this act; and that the Commissioner of the General Land Office is hereby required to prepare and issue such rules and regulations, consistent with this act, as shall be necessary and proper to carry its provisions into effect; and that the registers and receivers of the several land offices shall be entitled to receive the same compensation for any lands entered under the provisions of this act that they are now entitled to receive when the same quantity of land is entered with money, one half to be paid by the person making the application at the time of so doing, and the other half on the issue of the certificate by the person to whom it may be issued; but this shall not be construed to enlarge the maximum of compensation now prescribed by law for any register or receiver: Provided, That nothing contained in this act shall be so construed as to impair or interfere in any manner whatever with existing preemption rights: And provided, further, That all persons who may have filed their applications for a preemption right prior to the passage of this act, shall be entitled to all privileges of this act: Provided, further, That no person who has served, or may hereafter serve, for a period of not less than fourteen days in the army or navy of the United States, either regular or volunteer, under the laws thereof, during the existence of an actual war, domestic or foreign, shall be deprived of the benefits of this act on account of not having attained the age of twenty-one years.

SEC. 7. And be it further enacted, That the fifth section of the act entitled "An act in addition to an act more effectually to provide for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States, and for other purposes," approved the third of March, in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-seven, shall extend to all oaths, affirmations, and affidavits, required or authorized by this act.

SEC. 8. And be it further enacted, That nothing in this act shall be so construed as to prevent any person who has availed him or herself of the benefits of the first section of this act, from paying the minimum price, or the price to which the same may have graduated, for the quantity of land so entered at any time before the expiration of the five years, and obtaining a patent therefor from the government, as in other cases provided by law, on making proof of settlement and cultivation as provided by existing laws granting preemption rights.

APPROVED, May 20, 1862.

"Act of May 20, 1862, (Homestead Act)," Public Law 37-64 (12 STAT 392)., 05/20/1862: General Records of the United States Government, 1778 – 1992, Record Group 11; Old Military and Civil Records LICON, Textual Archives Services Division (NWCTB), National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Online version on November 2, 2006, available at:

<http://arcweb.archives.gov/>

ARC Identifier: 299815

Transcript of "Act of May 20, 1862, (Homestead Act)", National Archives, available at 100 Milestone Documents, online version on November 2, 2006, at:

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=31&page=transcript>

- Each group will complete a NARA Document Analysis Worksheet concerning the Homestead Act.
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf
- After completing their analysis, each group should share their discussion, thoughts and ideas concerning the Homestead Act.

The discussion should include:

What was the purpose of the Homestead Act?

Who was eligible for land?

What were the requirements? What were the limitations?

Amount of land available? Cost for the land?

Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1.	<p>TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Newspaper</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Map</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Advertisement</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Letter</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Telegram</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Congressional Record</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Patent</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Press Release</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Census Report</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Memorandum</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Report</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Other</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="radio"/> Newspaper	<input type="radio"/> Map	<input type="radio"/> Advertisement	<input type="radio"/> Letter	<input type="radio"/> Telegram	<input type="radio"/> Congressional Record	<input type="radio"/> Patent	<input type="radio"/> Press Release	<input type="radio"/> Census Report	<input type="radio"/> Memorandum	<input type="radio"/> Report	<input type="radio"/> Other
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2.	<p>UNIQUE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Interesting Letterhead</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Notations</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Typed</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Seals</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Interesting Letterhead	<input type="checkbox"/> Notations	<input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten	<input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp	<input type="checkbox"/> Typed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Seals					
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3.	<p>DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:</p>												
4.	<p>AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:</p> <p>POSITION (TITLE):</p>												
5.	<p>FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?</p>												
6.	<p>DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)</p> <p>A. List three things the author said that you think are important:</p> <p>B. Why do you think this document was written?</p> <p>C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.</p> <p>D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.</p> <p>E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:</p>												

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

Written Document Analysis Worksheet, Online version on November 2, 2006, at:
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf

Activity - Group Work – Broadside Poster

Discuss the structure of the poster, as well as the information contained within it. Note the title, sub-title, illustration, and the use of font to attract the reader's attention. Using this information, as well as the information gained from analyzing and discussing the Homestead Act, each group will create a broadside poster encouraging Americans to use the Homestead Act to gain land in the West.

Example of Broadside Poster:

YUMA COLORADO!

**THE CO. SEAT OF YUMA COUNTY,
SITUATED IN THE FAMOUS YUMA VALLEY,
IN NORTH-EASTERN COLORADO,**

One hundred and thirty-eight miles north-west of Denver, on the line of the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad. Yuma is 90 days old and has a population of over 600 souls, and has enjoyed a steady and healthy growth ever since, and is today the largest, wealthiest and best city between Denver, Colo., and McCook, Nebraska, a distance of 150 miles.

THE SOIL IS UNSURPASSED FOR FERTILITY.

It is either a dark sandy loam or a black clay loam, according to particular locality. The former is best suited for corn, while the latter is the best wheat land in the world.

THE NORTHWESTERN COLONIZATION AND TOWNSHIP COMPANY

"Yuma, Colorado!"; Reproduction of a broadside advertising Yuma, Yuma County, Colorado; [between 1890 and 1910]; Western History/Genealogy Dept., Denver Public Library. Online version on November 2, 2006, available at:

<http://photoswest.org/cgi-bin/imager?10014213+X-14213>

Their posters should:

- Be dated.
- Have a title and subtitle that expresses a main idea.
- Indicate a specific location available for settlement.
- Provide accurate information about the Act.
- List or illustrate 3 or more benefits of moving West.
- Contain illustrations that support the text.
- Make effective use of color to appeal to a reader.

Each group should present their final posters to the class.