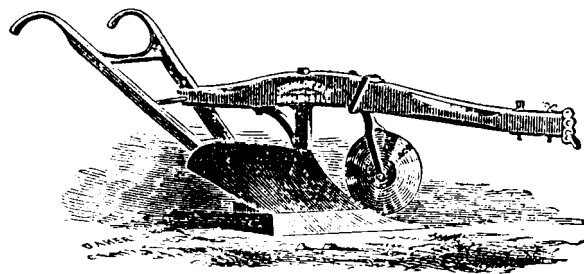


From Frontier to Community



National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium

History Education Curriculum

Target Grades: 1st-3rd grade

Key Words: frontier, community, natural resources, transportation, Mississippi River, Native Americans, fur trade, lead mining, steamboating

Subject Areas: history, social studies

Duration: 30-45 minutes

Title: *From Frontier to Community*

Summary:

The rich heritage of the Upper Mississippi River Valley is full of tales of Native Americans and fur traders, lead miners and steamboat captains. Let's explore the settlement of communities such as Dubuque and identify how and why they developed and prospered along this great river.

Objectives:

The objectives of this program is to give the participants a background in the settlement of the Upper Mississippi River Valley, specifically river towns such as Dubuque, and to identify the natural resources unique to this area and discover how they contributed to our shared history.

Group Size: Ideal size is 15 students, 30 students maximum

Background for Educators:

Rivers have long been ideal locations for settlements for many reasons, including transportation, safety, availability of food and water, and opportunities for earning a living. Throughout history these themes have played a part in the evolution of many communities, from small river towns to some of the larger, key cities in our nation. The abundant natural resources in our nation have influenced where people can not only survive, but thrive. The settlement of this region is very clearly related to the Mississippi River and one cannot appreciate the history of the area without considering this waterway as the key element in the transition from frontier to community.

Materials Needed:

- Bulletin board
- pushpins
- collage items – pictures, words, images
- Frontier to Community word scramble

Three dimensional artifacts/reproductions, including any/all of the following:

- Beaver fur, other furs optional
- Beaver felt hat
- Chunk of galena
- Lead shot
- Wood – tree trunk slice for example
- Wooden canoe paddle

Procedure:

-Set up a blank bulletin board, pushpins, and a variety of pictures, key words, and other printed items relating to the history of the Upper Mississippi River. Pass out the items to the students and invite them to help you create a collage that will bring to life the transition from Frontier to Community.

-Discuss these terms and this transition by communicating the following:

- **Example Outline**

What is the difference between these two words? What do they mean? Let's define them!

Frontier – unsettled wilderness with plants, animals, natural resources, etc.

Community – city/town, a settled environment with people, homes, businesses, transportation resources, etc.

Ask the kids to think about Community:

What **community** are you kids from? Well, let's think back to a time before your community was settled...when it was still part of the **frontier**!

What was there? Who? What did it look like? What resources were there that men and women would want to take advantage of and use to their benefit?

What was there?

Natural Resources- Forests, Lead (mineral nicknamed 'grey gold'), Animals (furs, food...deer, beaver, coyote, raccoon, muskrat, skunk, fox, etc.)

Mississippi River- waterways were essential systems of transportation, sources for food and water, ice in winter, etc.

Who?

Native Americans- Sauk, Fox, Ioway, Sioux, Mesquakie, Potawatomi, Oto, Missouri, Winnebago, Ojibwe

Now let's travel through history and find out why this frontier developed into a community!

What Natural Resource brought the early explorers and voyageurs here?

- The Animals of the Fur Trade (people came to make \$\$, trade goods, set up trade posts and forts, ended up forming communities)
- Beaver furs = hats (connect to world economy, hat making 'mad hatters', set standard of trade)

What pursuit of another Natural Resource brought the early miners and settlers here?

-Lead Mining (a heavy grayish metallic mineral found underground, variety of uses including lead shot, bullets, paint, etc. – but not in pencils today, that's graphite! – lead to formation of settlements with smelters, shot towers, etc. and thus communities!

Some very important characters from this era of history:

Julien Dubuque

-Mines of Spain, lead mining with Mesquakie, traded and shipped lead up and down river system, community namesake

Mathias Ham

-made a fortune as early entrepreneur, including lead mining, and then built the beautiful Ham House, Italianate Villa c. 1856, also invested in the railroad but lost money in the end

Once Dubuque had developed as a community along the river, another important connection to the region's natural resources developed. As technology and populations increased, our canoes were definitely not big enough and fast enough...so Steamboating was the next important theme in our community's settlement.

Evaluation:

Students are given a word scramble utilizing the key terms discussed in the program – often the teachers take this back to the classroom as a follow-up activity.

Additional resources:

Key Terms in varied fonts for the collage:

Natural Resources	<i>The Mississippi River</i>			
Native Americans	Fur Trade	Lead Mining	<i>Steamboating</i>	<i>Frontier</i>
Community	Animals	Transportation	Food	Water
Forests	Ice	Businesses	Homes	

Extensions:

- *Furs & Lead: Life of a Voyageur along the Mississippi River*
- *Native American Tales*

Credits:

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