



American Progress, 1872 by John Gast

Lessons that work: *Our Documents* 2004 Lesson Competition Winners

For the second year in a row, as part of *Our Documents*, NHD sponsored a lesson plan competition. NHD encouraged history, social studies, civics, and government teachers to develop and implement lesson plans that used one or more of the *100 Milestone Documents*. The lessons were also supposed to relate to the 2004 NHD theme of *Exploration, Encounter, and Exchange in History*.

Our panel of judges selected two lesson plans as the best of the entries submitted this year. While the two lessons were taught in very different contexts—one was used in an East Coast urban public high school, and the other in a Midwestern private middle school—they dovetail remarkably well. The high school lesson focuses on “The Trail of Tears”, and the middle school lesson looks at African-American homesteaders in the 1870s, so they both covered a part of America’s westward migration. Teachers in both classes used thematic and interdisciplinary approaches. The judges realized how closely the two lessons fit together when we learned that the teachers even used the same painting as the cornerstone for the lessons. That painting, John Gast’s *American Progress*, accompanies the lesson plans in this book. The original is housed at the Museum of the American West.

Note: With the exception of the Gast painting, all documents (facsimiles as well as transcripts) referenced in the following lesson plans can be found online, with the rest of the milestone documents, at www.ourdocuments.gov. All lessons and comments are printed with permission of teacher and student authors.

The Legacy of *Indian Removal* (1830-1840)

—*Winning Entry by Donna Sharer, High School Social Studies Teacher,
Northeast High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

In many ways, the topic is as relevant in the 21st century as it was in the 19th century. The relationship between indigenous people and settlers or immigrants still leads to confrontations. “Ethnic cleansing” is a foundation for conflicts in the Balkans, the Middle East, and eastern and southern Africa. Debates still range concerning definitions of who is “civilized” and “uncivilized.” In this lesson, students not only learn how to use primary and secondary resources to “do research,” but they also struggle with core issues of civil and human rights.

Theme: Encounter and exchange between the Cherokee Nation and European-American Settlers, the U.S. government, and the U.S. courts

Essential question: What can we learn to help us mend relationships between indigenous people and settlers/immigrants today, by studying the U.S. “Indian Removal” policy from 1830 to 1840?

Our Document Used: Document 25, President Andrew Jackson’s “Message to Congress ‘On Indian Removal,’” 1830. Document facsimile and transcript available at www.ourdocuments.gov.

Historical Background

In 1838-1839, between 15,000 and 17,000 Cherokee people were forcibly removed from their ancestral homes in the Southeastern United States. Nearly 7,000 U.S. soldiers rounded up the Cherokee and held them in military forts, and then marched them westward to “Indian Territory.” More than 4,000 Cherokee died on the march. Today, this episode is often called the “Trail of Tears;” the Cherokee call it “Nuna-da-ut-sun’y”.

Though many people in the U.S. have heard of the “Trail of Tears,” they may not know about the events that led to this forced removal of all the Eastern Native American Nations to lands west of the Mississippi River. In today’s vernacular, the Trail of Tears might be considered an example of “ethnic cleansing.” Though the U.S. government pledged that this would be a “voluntary removal,” nearly all the Cherokee were forced by military escort to move. Many left their homes only after they experienced broken treaties, were cheated in fraudulent land deals, and forced to fight wars to preserve their right to remain in the East.

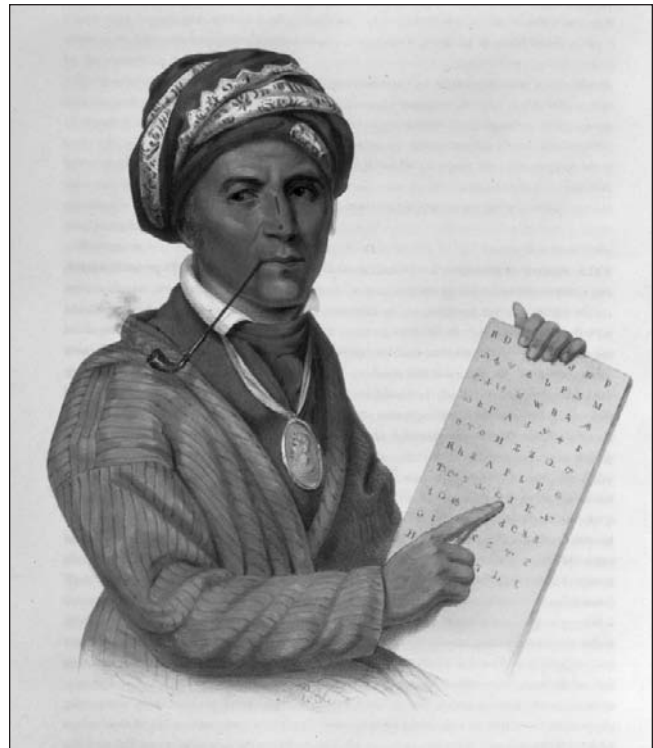
In the very early 1800s, President Thomas Jefferson was the first United States president to suggest a policy of “Indian removal.” The U.S.

government's position during Jefferson's time was that removal would enable Native American cultures to survive. In spite of the fact that the Cherokee had already adopted many European-American ways, the accepted view was that the Cherokee, like other Native American Nations, were "aliens" unable to adapt to U.S. customs. The Cherokee had a constitution modeled after the U.S. Constitution. They lived as farmers and ranchers. A few owned African-American slaves. The Cherokee had a written alphabet, and most were literate; parts of the Bible had been translated into Cherokee. The Cherokee had their own newspaper, *The Phoenix*. They were called one of the "Five Civilized Tribes."

In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. The Milestone Document at the heart of this lesson is President Andrew Jackson's "Message to Congress on 'Indian Removal'" (1830), delivered shortly after the 1830 Act was passed. The preamble of the Act states that this was: "An Act to provide for the exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi." Jackson and his presidency are often remembered for democratizing the White House, but his record as president should also reflect his influence on and involvement in the removal of Native Americans from the Eastern United States.

There was opposition against "Indian Removal" at the time. Missionaries who worked with the Cherokee were imprisoned. Tennessee Congressman Davy Crockett supported the Cherokee, at the expense of his political career. Henry Clay and Daniel Webster spoke out against the treaty to remove the Cherokee. When ordered to begin the removal process, General John Wool resigned his command in protest.

Two Supreme Court decisions in the 1830s sided with the Cherokee. Ultimately, however, with strong support by most U.S. Senators and Congressman, and by President Jackson, the policy was carried out.



1836 lithograph by John T. Bower, courtesy of the Library of Congress

Sequoyah with a tablet depicting the Cherokee alphabet. Sequoyah invented the Cherokee alphabet and created the first American Indian language newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*.

Cross-curricular connections

History

I used this unit in an eleventh grade U.S. History class. It is adaptable to World History in units on European colonization of the Americas, or to classes examining the history of human rights.

English

The lesson addresses English requirements, including reading, writing, thinking, and listening and speaking.

Technology

The lesson incorporates a popular presentation format (Power Point).

Teaching Activity

Objectives:

- To understand the circumstances and attitudes that led to the forced removal of the Cherokee Nation from the Southeastern United States in the 1830s;
- To define “manifest destiny” and its influence on “Indian Removal”;
- To read and interpret primary and secondary documents;
- To determine point of view/perspective on “Indian Removal”;
- To learn to develop a Power Point documentary; and
- To hypothesize about the impact today of immigration and settlement on indigenous peoples.

Activities

Day 1: What is *Manifest Destiny*? Using a “think-pair-share” approach (a combination of individual reflection, group work, and class discussion) have the students study John L. O’Sullivan’s 1839 quote, “Manifest Destiny”, and John Gast’s painting, *American Progress*. Through an iterative process, the class should develop a definition of “Manifest Destiny”. (Use worksheets on pages 39 and 42)

To finish Day 1, tell the students they will be studying how the idea of Manifest Destiny led to the U.S. “Indian Removal” policy during the 1830s. Though O’Sullivan wrote about Manifest Destiny in 1839 and the Gast painting is dated 1872, the idea of “manifest destiny” influenced U.S. policy toward Native American nations since the founding of the United States. Students will examine the case of the Southeastern Cherokee Nation as one example of encounter and exchange between the U.S. government, European-American settlers, and Native Americans.

Day 2: What was “Indian Removal?” What were President Jackson’s arguments for “Indian Removal” in 1830? As a class, introduce students to President Jackson by reading the introduction to Andrew Jackson’s 1830 Message to Congress from the Our Documents website.

(<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=25>) Review President Jackson’s relationship with the Cherokee based on the introduction.

Form small groups of three or four students. Each small group will read and analyze “Transcript of President Andrew Jackson’s Message to Congress ‘On Indian Removal’ (1830),” using the chart on page 42.

To finish Day 2, have the groups come back together as a class. Each group should share their findings with the rest of the class.

Day 3, 4 (and possibly 5): What were possible implications of President Jackson’s speech for the U.S., European-American settlers, and Native Americans?

Introduction/Review: Distribute copies of President Jackson’s “Message to Congress” used in Day 2. As a quick review, ask each student to pick out a word or phrase that “stands out” in President Jackson’s speech that helps them to understand Jackson’s position on Indian Removal. Go around the classroom and ask each student to read the word or phrase. Students should listen carefully to each other to hear the “message” of the speech.

Look at the class chart from the previous day. Ask students if they want to add or subtract anything. Ask the class to brainstorm about possible implications of Jackson’s speech for the United States, European-American settlers, and Native Americans. Put the brainstorming list on poster paper and save for the end of the unit.

Group Assignments: Divide the class into 11 small groups. Each group will examine a document related to “Indian Removal” between 1830 and 1840. Each group will then create a Power Point presentation consisting of 4 slides. The presentation should show information about their document. By combining the Power Point presentations, the class will create a documentary on Indian Removal from 1830 to 1840. (See pages 43-45 for a list of topics, documents and the websites for each group.)

Day 5 and 6 (and possibly 7): Presentation of Power Point slides

What information do you need from the Power Point presentations to complete your individual assignment?

1. Each group, in order, should present their slides.
2. After the presentation, review the individual assignment. You may either brainstorm possible responses as a class, or individually.
3. Conclude by returning to the essential question for the entire six or seven days. I like to use a “tag board.” Write the Essential Question on newsprint. Put two or three pieces of newsprint near the essential question. Give students a few minutes to generate responses. Then ask students to write their responses on the “tag board.”

Conclusion to the Lesson: The final activity will be an individual project. Each student will have to write a conclusion to the class documentary. The conclusions should include information for five Power Point slides. (See page 46 for the Handout explaining this activity).

Reflections on Lesson Success: Prior to this lesson, most of my high school students had very little or no experience with historical research. I developed this unit to provide students with a model for developing History Day projects. When I looked at what was required for a History Day project, I realized I had to walk students through a “sample” project, to teach them how to read, analyze and synthesize primary and secondary sources. The unit introduces primary and secondary sources, multiple perspectives, and

Key dates and events

1791 Cherokee were granted land in North Georgia by a U.S. treaty.

1803 Georgia ceded its western lands on the condition the U.S. remove all “Indian” titles as soon as possible.

1820s Native American Nations were relocated to Oklahoma, including the Sauk from Wisconsin, the Fox of Iowa, the Chickasaw and Choctaw from Mississippi, and the Creek from Alabama.

1825 President James Monroe issued a plan to remove all Native Americans to west of the Mississippi River, where European American settlers would not be allowed to live.

1829 Gold was discovered in Georgia.

1831 The Choctaw were the first Nation to walk West; many died from malnutrition, exposure, and cholera.

1831 Cherokee took their case to the Supreme Court, in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*.

1832 Cherokee took their case to the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Worcester vs. Georgia*; the Supreme Court determined that the only way the Cherokee could be removed was if they signed a removal treaty. 500 out of 17,000 Cherokee agree to a treaty to move West.

1835-1847 Seminoles from Florida resisted removal through guerrilla warfare in the Everglades; those who had not died or been removed to the West lived in the swamps.

1836 The Creek were moved west. 3,500 of the Creek Nation’s 15,000 died; those who resisted removal were put in chains and marched West.

May 1838 Removal of the Cherokee Nation to the West began under President Van Buren.

Student Reaction – Journal Reflections “Indian Removal 1830-1840”

I learned that the Indian Removal is an important event in the history of the U.S. The Indians were removed and now they live in the Oklahoma area. I also learned about the Trail of Tears, because I had to analyze it.

I think that using the primary documents was a good way to get the main points of the different cases. I learned the main points of Jackson’s speech, the court cases like *Worcester vs. Georgia*, the history of the Cherokees told by the Cherokees vs. the history of the Cherokees told by the Americans. I think primary cases were helpful!

I’ve always liked using the Power Point program, and I think it’s the best way to present the projects. I found it easy understanding the policy by using this program.

—Endrit Faslliaj
Eleventh Grade
Northeast High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Academically, the unit enabled students to tackle primary documents as a class and in cooperative teams. A number of students found the documents awkward because of writing style, language and references. By having students work together in teams, they could combine their background knowledge to summarize and/or interpret documents, maps, or secondary sources.

The students enjoyed using Power Point to create slides to present information. Some students were new to Power Point. Since Power Point is easy to use, those who hadn’t used it before were quickly acclimated. Next year, I will leave an extra day for each student to present his/her slide show, and to allow time for students to take notes on each presentation.

The individual assignment provided an opportunity for students to synthesize what they learned not only from their own research, but also by putting it in a context with other students’ presentations. They saw how a variety of secondary and primary sources can be used to answer a single essential question. I continued the Power Point slide format so students could learn how to put together a Power Point documentary. They not only had to put into words the impact and significance of U.S. Indian Removal policy from 1830-1840, but also had to make it “flow” from the class Power Point documentary.

As a follow up, I had students write a Journal Reflection on the process, product and content of the unit. I received good suggestions for improving the unit – including allowing more time – as well as affirmation that students now have a better grasp of how to interpret documents and a greater appreciation of the long term affects of “removal” or “ethnic cleansing” for the world.

Manifest Destiny

“America is destined for better deeds. We have no interest in the scenes of antiquity, only as lessons of avoidance of nearly all their examples. The expansive future is our arena, and for our history. We are entering on its untrodden space, with the truths of God in our minds, beneficent objects in our hearts, and with a clear conscience unsullied by the past. We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march? Providence is with us, and no earthly power can. We point to the everlasting truth on the first page of our national declaration, and we proclaim to the millions of other lands, that “the gates of hell” – the powers of aristocracy and monarchy – “shall not prevail against it. Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?”

(John L. O’Sullivan, *Manifest Destiny*, 1839)

1. Read the quote by yourself, and then list key words or phrases.
2. Now work with a partner and combine your two lists of key words or phrases into one shared list.
3. Next, write a definition of “manifest destiny,” based on your shared list of key words and phrases.

Put two or three pairs together and form a small group. Share your pair definitions of manifest destiny. If possible, come up with one definition of manifest destiny. If you can’t agree on the definition, write two definitions.

Share your definition with the class. Help the class come up with one single definition of “Manifest Destiny.” Write this definition on the board or on an overhead.

Analyzing a Painting to Better Understand “Manifest Destiny”

—*American Progress* by John Gast

Look at John Gast’s painting, *American Progress*. Work in your small groups (4-6 students) and analyze the picture.

1. Complete the following chart based on what you see in the painting:

List the people	List the objects	List the animals	List the colors
What do you notice about the people?	What do you notice about the objects?	What do you notice about the animals?	What do you notice about the colors?

2. What might be the painter’s message? How do you know?

3. How does the painting relate to O’Sullivan’s quote on “manifest destiny?”

4. Look at the class’s definition of “manifest destiny.” How does the painting add to the definition? How does it distract from the definition, or contradict it?

5. As a class, discuss your small group analysis of the painting. Are you still happy with your class’s definition of “Manifest Destiny?” Either keep it, or adjust it.



1905
President Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine
President Theodore Roosevelt formulates his corollary in his annual messages to Congress in 1904 and 1905. It expands Monroe's 1823 doctrine that "the American continents" were no longer open to colonization by European powers by adding that the United States has the right to intervene in affairs of Western Hemisphere nations if it is in their interest.

1913
16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Federal Income Tax
This amendment, which passes on July 2, establishes Congress' right to impose a federal income tax. It is the first personal income tax levied by the federal government.

17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Direct Election of U.S. Senators
With this amendment, which passes Congress on May 13, voters are permitted to cast direct votes for United States Senators. Prior to its passage, Senators were chosen by state legislatures.

1916
Keating-Owen Child Labor Act
As the nation's industries expand during the Second Industrial Revolution, so too does child labor. By the early 20th century, social reformers express concern that long working hours and poor work conditions are harming the nation's youth. This act passes through the efforts of such reformers. The act limits the work hours of children and forbids the interstate sale of goods produced by child labor.



1917
Zimmermann Telegram
This telegram, written by German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann, is a coded message requesting Mexican support for Germany during the First World War. The message instructs the German minister in Mexico to propose an alliance with Mexico if war breaks out between Germany and the United States. In return, Germany and Japan will help Mexico regain the territories (New Mexico, Arizona, Texas) that it lost to the United States during the Mexican War. The telegram is intercepted by British intelligence, shown to President Woodrow Wilson, and helps pull the United States into the First World War.



Timeline CONTINUED ON PAGE 53

Andrew Jackson and Indian Removal

Look at a \$20 bill. President Andrew Jackson’s face is on it. What do you know about President Jackson? Why do you think he is honored with having his face appear on U.S. currency?

Join a group of 3 or 4 students. As a group, read “Andrew Jackson’s Message to Congress ‘On Indian Removal’” (1830) and complete the following chart:

Why Jackson made the speech	
Why the policy will benefit the U.S.	
How the policy will benefit the U.S.	
Why the policy will benefit the Native Americans	
How the policy will benefit the Native Americans	

Topics, Web Sites, and Power Point Assignments for Groups (1-11)

Directions for each group: In your group, you will read one or more documents related to “Indian Removal” from 1830 to 1840. Using Power Point, your group will create 3 or 4 slides. Your Power Point presentation should include: one title slide with the title of your document(s); and two or three slides that answer the questions for your document(s). Some groups will include images of maps, drawings or paintings. After each group has finished making its slides, we will show them in a combined Power Point presentation. Remember that your classmates will take notes from your slides, so that each of you can individually write a conclusion for the class documentary.

Group 1 Topic: Background information on the two presidents involved in “Indian Removal” during the 1830s.

a) Andrew Jackson: (biographical information and “Indian Question” section)

<http://www.americanpresident.org/history/andrewjackson/biography/DomesticAffairs.common.shtml>

b) Martin VanBuren: (Students should be aware that VanBuren was president in 1838, but they do not have to read the biographical information) <http://ap.beta.polar.design.com/history/martinvanburen/biography/>

c) Some of the “players” in the Trail of Tears: <http://cherokeehistory.com/image1a.html>

Power Point Assignment: Who were the U.S. presidents from 1830–1840 who were involved in “Indian Removal?” Include brief biographical information on both presidents as it relates to their Native American policy. Include a brief introduction to Cherokee “players” in 1830 to 1840 events from the “Cherokee History” web site.

Group 2 Topic: Chronology <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html> Web site: The link is from the resource bank for the PBS series “Africans in America.”

Power Point Assignment: Create a chronology of key dates and events in “Indian Removal.”

Group 3 Topic: Maps related to the Cherokee Nation

<http://www.cherokeehistory.com/map1.html> (series of maps pre and post removal)

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/1797b6.jpg> (map of Southeastern US in 1797)

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/1815m4.jpg> (Cherokee and Creek Nations 1815)

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/1839b77.jpg> (map of Southern US states 1839)

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/1884r6.jpg> (map claims of Cherokee Nation 1884)

Power Point Assignment: Create a timeline based on the information from the maps. Review the maps on the Cherokeehistory.com website. What do you notice? Do you see any patterns regarding boundaries? Review the historical maps from the University of Georgia websites. For each map, write your observations regarding names of places, territorial claims, etc. Decide which maps should be part of your presentation based on what they maps “tell” about Cherokee and U.S. land claims.

Group 4 Topic: Removal Act of 1830

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/removal.htm>

Power Point Assignment: According to the Act, what is the main goal? Include a list of the provisions of the Act.

Group 5 Topic: Excerpts of Senator Frelinghuysen's Speech to the U.S. Senate

<http://www.osv.org/education/LessonPlans/ShowLessons.php?PageID=P&LessonID=40&DocID=149&UnitID=6>

Power Point Assignment: What are the Senator's arguments against the "Indian Removal" Act? What does he propose?

Group 6 Topic: Letters from the Cherokee Nation.

a) 1828 Memorial (letter) of the Cherokee Nation

<http://www.osv.org/education/LessonPlans/ShowLessons.php?PageID=P&LessonID=40&DocID=2057&UnitID=6>

b) 1831 letter from John Martin and John Ridge, Cherokee leaders in Washington, to John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. <http://oai.sunsite.utk.edu/sgm/00116.html>

Power Point Assignment: Summarize the main points of each letter. Based on the letters, what is the Cherokee position on their living conditions and "Indian" removal?

Group 7 Topic: Supreme Court Case, *Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia* (1831)

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/chokekee.htm>

Power Point Assignment: What was the focus of the case? How was it related to "Indian Removal"? What were the main arguments in the case? What was the decision in the case?

Group 8 Topic: Supreme Court Case, *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832)

<http://www.civics-online.org/library/formatted/texts/worcester.html>

Power Point Assignment: What was the focus of the case? How was it related to “Indian Removal”?
What were the main arguments in the case? What was the decision in the case?

Group 9 Topic: Treaty of New Echota

<http://www.yvwiiusdinvnohii.net/history/EchotaTreaty1835.htm>

Power Point Assignment: List the main provisions of the Treaty.

Group 10 Topic: Cherokee letter protesting the Treaty of New Echota

a) <http://www.yvwiiusdinvnohii.net/history/EchotaTreaty1835.htm> (bottom of the page)

b) <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h3083t.html> (copy of letter)

Power Point Assignment: What are Ross’ main arguments in the letter? How does he describe their situation?
What is his appeal to the U.S. Congress?

Group 11 Topic: Two contradictory statements on “Indian Removal”

U.S. State Department statement on “Indian Removal”

a) <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/dwe/16338pf.htm>

b) Brief history of the “Trail of Tears” from the Cherokee Nation

<http://www.neosoft.com/powersource/ Cherokee/history.html>

Group 11 Power Point Assignment: Summarize the U.S. State Department’s statement and the Cherokee Nation statement. List similarities and differences.

Individual Assignment

INDIVIDUALLY you will write a conclusion to the class documentary. Your conclusion should include:

- 1. Information for one slide. Include four or five unresolved questions on cause and effect, and/or the impact and significance of the “Indian Removal” policy of 1830 to 1840.**
- 2. Information for three slides. Was the policy just, unjust, or a combination? What are the implications of the policy on U.S. history? What might we learn from the policy of removal and types of encounters between the indigenous communities and colonizers or settlers’ communities, and/or events in other nations? (past, present or future)**
- 3. Information for the final slide (your choice): What image/question/statement/etc. do you want for your conclusion? Write the question/statement, or include a copy of the image with a question or statement to explain the image.**

Encountering the Plains: *African-American Homesteading on the Central Plains (1870s)*

—Winning Entry, D. Clayton Lucas, Social Studies Department Chair; and Michelle Stie-Buckles, English Department Chair; Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy, Overland Park, Kansas

Many historians suggest that our national identity was established during the settlement of the American West, but the frontier of popular media omits a key component of the narrative. Teaching about the Black Homesteaders in post-Civil War America represents an opportunity for teachers and students to explore a part of American history that few textbooks have documented. An inquiry into this African-American experience yields new ideas and encourages students to re-evaluate traditional narratives of American western frontier settlement.

As our culture has become increasingly diverse, students are drawn to topics that challenge conventional wisdom. In addition, the consideration of a period in history that can be viewed through a different lens, and to which students can relate, promotes a positive, engaged learning environment.

Historical Background

The Homestead Act (Document 31)

Passed by Congress in 1862, the Homestead Act granted 160 acres of the public domain to both citizens and non-citizens who would live on and farm the land. Motivated by the Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian society of small farmers filling the continent, the Homestead Act was politically expedient in securing the Central Plains while complementing the construction of a transcontinental railroad. Initially the Act had greatest impact on White settlers from eastern states. Promoted by railroad companies, states, and territories, these lands in the Central Plains later become the destination for an African-American migration in the years following the Civil War.

Our Documents Used

(Document facsimiles and transcriptions available at www.ourdocuments.gov)

Document 28, Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854

Document 31, Homestead Act, 1862

Document 40, 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, 1865

Historical Background

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The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Document 40)

Ratified by Congress in December 1865, this Amendment ended slavery in the United States. The 13th Amendment had a huge impact on the African-American homesteading movement that followed.

Reconstruction

The years of repression and economic hardship in the South after the end of the Civil War (in the period known as “Reconstruction”) led former slaves such as Benjamin “Pap” Singleton to explore the possibility of a mass Black migration to Kansas and the West. Drawn by circulars reporting bountiful land, utopian groups began migrating to the region. By 1877, a small group of “Black Kentuckians” had established “Nicodemus,” an African-American settlement in Graham County, Kansas. In the next two years, motivated by continuing poverty, terrorism, and violence in the South, combined with reports of better conditions and greater opportunity in the West, larger groups of Blacks migrated in what came to be known as the “Exodus of 1879.” Those African-Americans who migrated would later be referred to as “Exodusters.” Nicodemus proved to be unsuccessful. Most of the Blacks who migrated there were poor and lacked education, and the community lacked the funds necessary to develop farms

and survive. The Union Pacific Railroad bypassed Nicodemus and chose instead to lay its track through a neighboring town, which also contributed to the town’s failure. Many Black migrants to the area succeeded, however, especially those who settled in larger towns and cities.

One notable African-American was Edwin P. McCabe. In 1882, he was elected State Auditor of Kansas and became the first Black man to hold a major political office in the West. In 1889, McCabe championed a movement to make Oklahoma a Black state. That spring, Oklahoma opened a large tract of land for African-American settlement. During the next twenty years, more than 100,000 African-Americans settled in Oklahoma and established numerous Black communities. Black homesteaders like Edwin McCabe hoped that Oklahoma would be a safe haven from the oppression they had left in the South. Unfortunately, however, political events turned against them; by 1914, segregation had been declared legal in the state.

Teaching Activity

Objectives

Through this interdisciplinary, one-week study, students will analyze and evaluate three major documents in American History: the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Homestead Act and the 13th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. In addition students will examine:

- *The motives for movement of African-Americans to the Central Plains in the decades that followed the Civil War;*
- *Whether the omission of the African-American narrative in the historiography of the American West challenges or adds new dimensions to this period in American history;*
- *How Black families, seeking their American dream, played a critical role in the settlement of the continent; and*
- *Push-pull factors incorporated by individuals, entrepreneurs, and governments that facilitated this movement.*

School Context

This lesson was designed for use in the sixth grade of a private middle school in Kansas. The school uses a thematic approach; the theme for sixth grade was the Western Expansion Movement in America. The topic of homesteaders in the Central Plains had special meaning for our students, since it is local and regional history for them.

Teachers in our school often use interdisciplinary approaches, as we did for this unit. The lesson was co-designed and team-taught by a social studies teacher and an English teacher. An art teacher also assisted for several parts of the lesson.

Usually the classes met for a regular 50-minute period, but several times we were able to take advantage of “block days” when the students could work on a project for 1-1/4 hours. Classes are quite small (fewer than 15 students per class), so nearly all work was done with the class as a whole. Teachers of larger classes may want to have students do some of the work in small groups.

Introducing the Lesson (One Class Period)

I started the lesson by writing the following question on the board: Where would you go and what would you have done if you were suddenly a freed slave in 1865? This question got students thinking about African-Americans, and our brief class discussion served as a review of the history of slavery in America. Students were given five minutes to write their journal; they were to write a list of five things they expected to learn.

Next, the art teacher showed the students John Gast’s painting *American Progress*. In class discussion, they analyzed the painting. They talked about such things as how it was structured, the use of color and exaggerated imagery, and where the eye goes and how it moves.

Then I handed out copies of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. In the history class, we talked about the document’s meaning and purpose, and its unintended effects. I also had the students connect the Act to their knowledge of “Bleeding

Kansas” and Kansas state history, from earlier in the school year. The English teacher had the students look at the unfamiliar words, sentence structure, and other aspects of the language in the document. We went through the document line by line, paragraph by paragraph, identifying the subject, occasion, audience, purpose, and speaker (SOAPS method). We also used concept mapping to illustrate cause and effect, and outcomes. (See page 52 for an example of a concept map framework students used for this lesson.)

To end the lesson, students spent another five minutes writing in their journals. Did the discussion answer their questions? What did they learn from looking at Gast’s painting and analyzing the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

Part 1—Distributing the Land (1 or 2 class periods)

I handed out copies of the Homestead Act of 1862 and the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. We went through both documents as a class, again using concept mapping and the SOAPS method of analysis. We discussed connections between the Homestead Act and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the living conditions of freed slaves in the South immediately after the end of the Civil War. We also talked about the fact that there are current efforts to pass a new U.S. Homestead Act, and explored how this might relate to the Homestead Act of 1862.

In their journals, students were expected to define and explain several terms and answer a series of discussion questions.

Terms to Know

Homestead Act
13th Amendment
Reconstruction
Utopian settlements
Exodusters



Discussion Questions:

- *What unintended results did the Homestead Act have on African-Americans in the South following the Civil War?*
- *How did the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad encourage migration to the Central Plains?*
- *What role did religion play in Black migration during this period?*

Part 2—Migration: Sudden arrival on the plains (1 or 2 class periods)

This part of the lesson consisted mostly of lecture about regional information. We discussed the suddenness and size of the African-American migration to the West between 1870 and 1880. We talked about the difficulties the African-Americans encountered both during the journey and upon their arrival on the Plains. Again, students are expected to define terms and answer discussion questions in their journals.

Terms to Know

- Millenarianism
- Nicodemus
- Edwin P. McCabe
- Segregation

Discussion Questions:

- *What challenges did Black homesteaders face in the farming communities that were established during this period?*
- *Were Kansas and Oklahoma lands of opportunity for all homesteaders and immigrants? Explain your answer.*
- *Why were most Blacks who settled in cities and towns more successful than those who attempted to establish farming communities?*

Creation of a class mural (3 weeks)

Interspersed among the classroom discussions, the students created a 3-panel mural representing the lesson in visual form. This gave opportunity for students who are more visual to shine. The two sixth grade classes combined their efforts, with students from one class working on one panel, students from the other class working on the third panel, and the middle panel having a mix of several students from each class. Those students who were not artistically talented contributed by doing research, determining what images to use. Before applying any paint, the students had to map out a miniature draft version. The art

teacher worked with the students on designing and making the mural.

Follow-up Activities

Students should be encouraged to further their study of African-American homesteading and related topics. Possible classroom activities include:

- *Organize an immigrants' day in class having students present the cultural customs and traditions of one of your region's immigrant groups.*
- *Assign each student an African-American homesteading community to research. The Kansas State Historical Society website has excellent materials to support such research. Ask students to write research papers or give presentations about their community. Have students draw a map of the region, which shows the location of their community.*
- *Have students create a brochure that might have promoted settlement or homesteading. The content and approach of the brochure should be consistent with the 1870s, but students should be encouraged to use*



Original mural created by 6th grade students at Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy, Overland Park, Kansas.

contemporary technology to produce an appealing advertisement.

- Have students draw maps and/or charts indicating where and when the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Homestead Act, and the 13th Amendment had an impact, and present their maps to the class in oral reports.
- Students might study utopian movements in Kansas in the post-Civil War era.
- Students interested in learning more about African-American history of that era might study *The Buffalo Soldiers*; *Black cowboys*; *Jim Crow laws in the South*; or *Black fur traders, explorers, and agrarian settlements in the American West*.

Cross-Curricular Connections

History/Social Studies: Our school uses a thematic approach, with the sixth grade studying migrations and Westward movement in America. We taught this unit about African-American homesteaders immediately following a unit on “The Trail of Tears.” Another approach would be to incorporate this lesson into a study of slavery and African-American experience during the 19th Century, or a study of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

homesteaders will engage students and help them to appreciate the burdens and emotional toll on the families involved. Studying related literary sources helps students:

- Examine cultural dilemmas, challenges and restrictions faced by African-American homesteaders.
- Explore the language and expression used to communicate the conditions faced by the settlers and the language and expression used in the documents studied.
- Examine the homesteading experience as expressed in poetry, oral traditions and artistic renderings.
- Students can be encouraged to write their own journals assuming the role of a homesteader on the Central Plains in the late 1800s.

Environmental History/Geography:

In a related study discipline, students of environmental history might study the impact of homesteading on the ecosystem of the Great Plains. The study of homesteading and the resultant environmental changes on the landscape enables students to analyze the historical relationship between people and the land they occupy. A study of these relationships helps students:

American Literature/English: A study of the narratives, first-hand perspectives and accounts of

- Identify the region in the Central United States where the major part of the migration took place and explore the impact of agrarianism on the environment of the region;
- Analyze modes of production as they apply to differing cultures and their respective needs;
- Explore varying ideas and perceptions of the land as viewed by the cultures that occupy the land; and
- Analyze how the African-American experience in the role of homesteader may have altered the landscape.

Recommended Sources

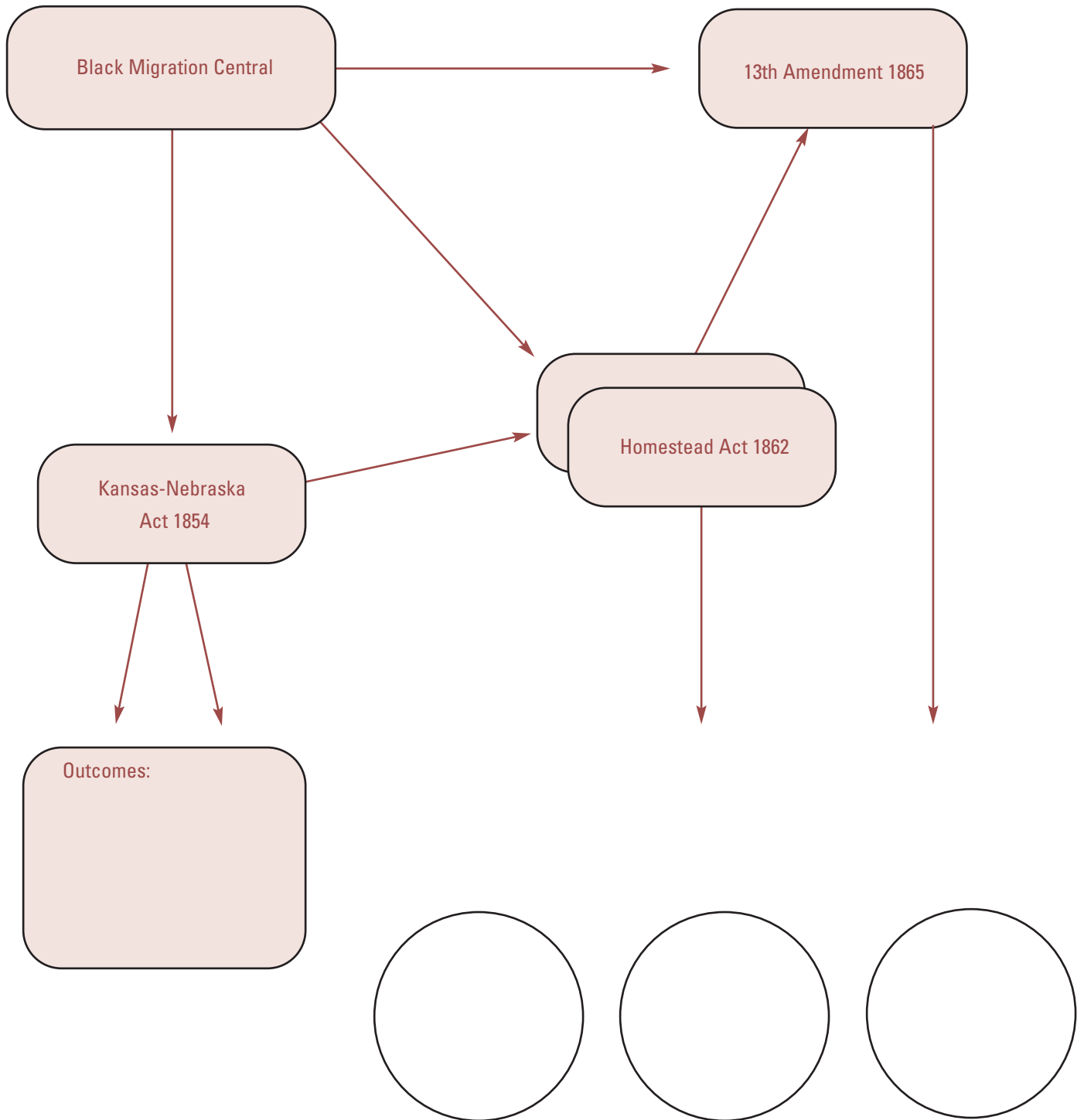
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Concept Map



[PUBLIC LAW 331]
[CHAPTER 564]

S. J. Res. 119

THE WHITE HOUSE
RECEIVED
DEC 11 1941

DIVISION OF PERSONNEL
RECEIVED
DEC 11 1941

Seventy-seventh Congress of the United States of America;
At the First Session

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Friday, the third
day of January, one thousand nine hundred and forty-one

JOINT RESOLUTION

to amend the Government of



**1917 continued
Joint Address to
Congress Leading to
a Declaration of War
Against Germany**

Following German U-boat attacks on American ships and the appearance of the Zimmermann telegram, President Woodrow Wilson delivers this address to a joint session of Congress on April 2, calling for a declaration of war against Germany. With Congressional approval, the United States officially enters World War I.

**1918
President Woodrow
Wilson's 14 Points**

Hoping to provide a framework for worldwide peace following World War I, Woodrow Wilson presents Congress with a set of goals, called his 14 Points, on Jan. 8. Eight of the points deal with allowing emerging nations to pursue self-determination. Another seeks to solve disputes between colonized nations and European colonizers, while the remaining five offer a vision of freer trade, reduced numbers of arms, open treaty negotiation, and an organization for resolving international conflicts peacefully.

**1920
19th Amendment to the
U.S. Constitution:
Women's Right to Vote**

After several decades of effort by women suffragists, this amendment is ratified on Aug. 18, specifying that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

**1928
Boulder Canyon
Project Act**

This act authorizes the construction of the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River and the All-American Canal to the Imperial Valley in California. Its purpose is to create a dam that will control flooding and produce a reliable source of water in the region.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

by the Congress of the

Charles D. Rayburn
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Charles McNary
Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.

Approved
December 11 1941 305 p.m. EST.
Franklin D. Roosevelt



Unemployed insured workers registering for jobs and filing Social Security benefit claims.

1933

Tennessee Valley Authority Act

This act of May 18 creates the Tennessee Valley Authority, which will oversee the construction of dams to control flooding, improve navigation, and create affordable electric power in the Tennessee Valley basin.

National Industrial Recovery Act

This act of June 16 creates a National Recovery Administration, which will supervise fair trade codes and guarantee laborers a right to collective bargaining with employers.

1935

National Labor Relations Act

Also known as the Wagner Act, this bill is signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt on July 5. It establishes the National Labor Relations Board and addresses relations between unions and employers in the private sector.

Social Security Act

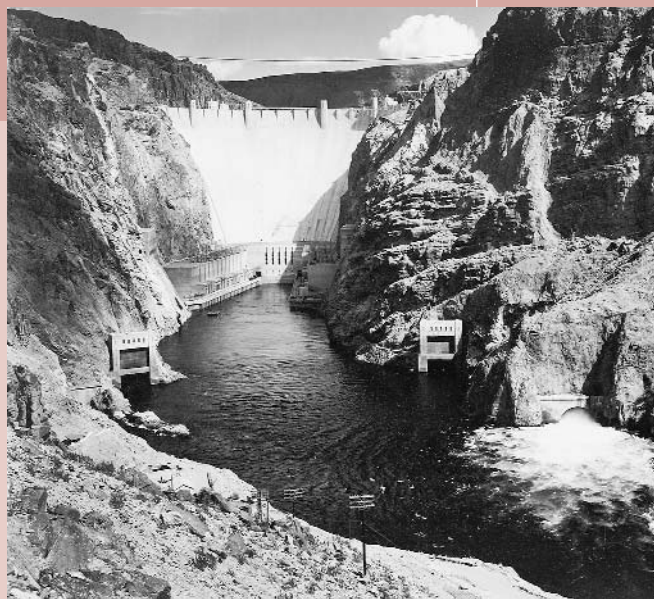
This act of Aug. 14 establishes a system of old-age benefits for workers, benefits for victims of industrial accidents, unemployment insurance, aid for dependent mothers and children, the blind, and the physically handicapped.

1936

President Franklin Roosevelt's Radio Address Unveiling Second Half of the New Deal

Upon entering office in 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt enacts a series of measures commonly referred to as the First New Deal to end the nation's economic depression. The First New Deal is not successful in pulling the nation out of its depression. In this radio address, President Roosevelt responds to critics of his early measures by announcing a second set of measures, which are known as the Second New Deal. These include a series of new relief programs, such as the Works Progress Administration.

Timeline CONTINUED ON PAGE 61



Boulder Dam, 1941