

Walk Through Nebraska History



An integrated curriculum program with tools for introducing materials within the classroom.

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Introduction

Program Goal:

The *Walk Through Nebraska History* program provides the possibility for integration of all curriculum areas from the fourth through eighth grade levels.

Program Rationale:

Creativity is a necessity when working in the classroom and this program provides exactly that. With the *Walk Through Nebraska History* program, the opportunity exists for expanded use of materials in multiple curricular areas.

Program Summary:

The *Walk Through Nebraska History* program provides information on 20 Nebraska historical markers. Integrated curricular ideas are included to be used as “tools” for learning both in the classroom and at home. This program was written by Nebraska teachers with the understanding that this is a starting point and expanded ideas are encouraged! An example of how to use this program:

Start by having students exercise as a class from one historical to the next. Miles can be earned by actually walking a mile or time may be allotted to equal a mile for activities such as jumping rope or playing softball. Physical activities with families may be included as well. As students are accruing mileage from one marker to the next, math instructors may create story problems to accompany the program (i.e., if Johnnie bikes and Susie walks between historical markers, who will get there first?). At the same time, language arts instructors may have students keep a log of their “travels” from one historical marker to the next, perhaps from the perspective of the pioneer. The science instructor may decide to teach about the different weather patterns experienced across the state as the students are “traveling” from one end to the other. The art instructor may have students paint, design, or mold different historical markers as they “come upon them.”

As you can see, students are not actually physically traveling to the different historical markers, but they are learning about them in different classrooms simultaneously as if they were actually making the trek like the pioneers did. It is up to the school to decide if an historical site is close enough for them to take a field trip and visit. Families may also decide to tour Nebraska with an educational incentive such as the *Walk Through Nebraska History* program in mind.



TO: Teachers

FROM: John LeFeber
Director of Social Science Education
Nebraska Department of Education

Barb Scudder-Soucie
Section of Health Promotion & Education
Nebraska Department of Health

DATE: Fall, 1996

RE: ***Walk Through Nebraska History***

We are pleased to provide you a copy of the ***Walk Through Nebraska History*** program. This program was developed by teachers from across the State of Nebraska. It is designed to integrate the different curricula areas.

The ***Walk Through Nebraska History*** program includes suggested tools for introducing materials within the classroom. This program was also developed to help fill a void in the area of available materials. Some of the materials are designed to encourage family participation as well.

We are excited about this program and hope that you will be too. To improve the program, it is our plan to have another route across Nebraska available for 1997. Please let us know of any suggestions that you may have. Thank you for your interest!



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WALK THROUGH NEBRASKA HISTORY

Travel Log

Name _____ Date _____ Grade _____

School _____ Teacher _____

I started at _____ Historical Marker I finished at _____ Historical Marker

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Date							
Activity							
Time/ Distance							
How Do You Feel About This Activity?							
Adult Signature							

TOTAL MILES

iv

Student Signature

Date Completed

Total Miles



CAPITOL HILL

This site on Capitol Hill was for a decade the location of Nebraska's second territorial capitol. The building was erected here in 1857 and 1858 and served until the seat of government was removed to Lincoln in 1858.

Acting-Governor Cuming designated Omaha as the Capital of Nebraska Territory by convening the First Territorial Legislature in Omaha on January 16, 1855. It met in a small two story brick building donated by the Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company and located on Ninth Street between Douglas and Farnam facing the Missouri River. It housed the legislature for the sessions of 1855 and 1857.

The second capitol was a handsome brick building 137 by 93 feet. The supreme court, the library and government offices were on the first floor and the legislature and governor on the second. Corinthian columns planned for the building were removed as unsafe after several had collapsed.

In 1869, the Capitol building and grounds were presented by the state to Omaha for use as a school. The building was pronounced unsafe and the first public Omaha High School was erected in its place on Capitol Hill in 1872. The present Central High School building completed in 1912 replaced the earlier building. The central court of the school represents the approximate area of the original capitol.

Greater Omaha Historical Society
Historical Land Mark Council
20th and Dodge Streets
Omaha, Nebraska
Douglas County
Marker 30

Art

- Find pictures of Corinthian columns which were used in second building. Use Trailblazers #14, it has pictures of territorial and state capitols.

Language Arts

- Tell a story in your own words or act out a drama of the middle of the night theft of the state seal as it was taken from Omaha to Lincoln.
- Access centennial information developed during 1960's, Nebraska Centennial or World Herald information; Mike Parks' works on Nebraska history (i.e., "Bygone Nebraska," "Nebraska In the Making").

Math

- Figure the circumference of the Capitol building.
- Compare the heights of the Capitol buildings to the Sears Tower.
- Compare the heights of different state capitols.
- Compare the heights of today's Capitol building with the two previous buildings.
- Figure the square feet of the Capitol building.

Physical Education/Health

- Walk the stairs to simulate taking the stairs up to Capitol Hill.



- Take a walking tour of your town and discuss the different architecture.

Social Studies

- Research territorial capitol (why was this location chosen).
- Research political battles at the old Capitol.
- Compare and contrast today's legislature to the territorial legislature.
- Find the location of the first Capitol building on a current Omaha map. How would you get from there to downtown Omaha (or to Westroads, etc.)?



THE GREAT PLATTE VALLEY

Here is the great Platte Valley, Highway to the West. On these nearby bluffs prehistoric Indians built their homes. The Pawnee and Oto established large earth lodge villages near here.

As you travel west in the valley you will follow the route of the Indians, white explorers, and the early trails to the western United States. In 1820, an exploring party under Major Stephen Long followed the Platte Valley to the Rocky Mountains, as did an 1826 expedition under General William Ashley. By 1830, the valley had become the major supply route for fur traders in the Rocky Mountains.

Beginning in 1847, the Mormons on their way to Utah followed a trail along the north side of the Platte. The Oregon Trail reached the Platte 150 miles west of here and followed the south side of the river. By the late 1850's, it was estimated that 90% of all traffic which crossed the Plains followed the Platte.

The famous Pony Express followed the Platte Valley, as did the first transcontinental telegraph line. By 1869, the first transcontinental railroad was completed and it, too, followed the valley, opening the land along the river for permanent settlement.

Historical Land Mark Council
I-80 Rest Area (westbound), near Gretna
Sarpy County
Marker 61

Art

- Make an earth lodge.

Language Arts

- Utilize books by the following authors for discussion/assignments: Stephen Long and William Ashley.

Math

- Create math assignments which include the calculation of the square miles of Great Platte Valley and the Platte River.

Physical Education/Health

- Demonstrate and focus on skills needed for games played by pioneers.
- Compare the differences between medicine and cures of the 1800's to today's.

Social Studies

- Experience the concept of village and/or community living (i.e., organize the classroom accordingly).
- Discuss the impact the railroad had and still has today on opening up the west.
- Discover what major roads were in the Platte Valley—Oregon/Mormon Trails, Transcontinental Railroad, Lincoln Highway, and I-80.



- Discuss why routes follow rivers.
- Take a field trip to explore the geology of rivers, villages, bluffs, etc.
- Discover why the Platte River was such a good roadway by comparing its drainage basin and directional orientation to other Nebraska rivers and rivers such as the Smoky Hill in Kansas. (The Platte has very few creeks to cross as it has a very narrow drainage basin.)
- Resources: Local Natural Resource Districts for this information and drainage basin maps.



FERGUSON HOUSE

William Henry Ferguson, Lincoln businessman and investor, built this house in 1909-11. It is one of the best examples of the Second Renaissance Revival style in Lincoln and perhaps in Nebraska. Architects were Searles, Hirsh and Gavin of Cleveland, Ohio; the builder was Olson Construction of Lincoln. Purchased by the State of Nebraska in 1963, the Ferguson House is administered by the Nebraska State Historical Society*. This property is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Nebraska State Historical Society
Ferguson Mansion, 700 So. 16, Lincoln
Lancaster County
Marker 253

*The Ferguson House is no longer administered by the Nebraska State Historical Society. It is now administered by the Office of Travel and Tourism for the State of Nebraska.

Art

- Compare and contrast the architecture of the early 1900's to today's.
- Draw and design a house similar to the Ferguson House.
- Find pictures of Nebraska wildflowers.

Language Arts

- Plan a Christmas party (or other holiday party) at the Ferguson House (who would be invited, what would be served, etc.).
- Develop a poster advertising the Ball to be held at the Ferguson House.

Math (Integrated with several other areas)

- Plan a Ball to be held at the Ferguson House. Include cost of food, entertainment, decorations.

Physical Education/Health

- Compare and play games of early Nebraska (stick and hoop, kick the can, etc.) to games of today.
- Search out the local bike trail and take a bike ride leading you to an historical site.
- Discover the city of Lincoln's length and width during the Ferguson House occupation.
- Take a walk the length of what Lincoln was in 1909.

Science

- Plan a spring garden (vegetable and flower) typical of Ferguson House era.
- How did the Ferguson House use energy (i.e., lighting, heat)?
- What were the modes of transportation during the "Ferguson years?"

Social Studies

- Plan a field trip to the State Capitol, visiting several sites and ending with a picnic at the Capitol.
- Compare and contrast the lifestyle of the people who lived in Lincoln then to today.



- Bring in an architect or local builder to compare the Ferguson House to a typical house of that time and a house of today in terms of cost, style, furnishings, plumbing, size, etc.
- Tie the Kennard House to the Ferguson House in terms of age, size, style, cost (Kennard was the man who stole the seal—see Marker 30 information).
- Find out where the children living in the Ferguson House would have gone to school? Compare the schools then and now.

Resource

- Nebraska Game and Parks Wild Flower Identification
- Map of Lincoln during Ferguson years
- Historic Places The National Register for Nebraska Vol 70 Spring 1989
- Nebraska State Historical Society



CITY OF LINCOLN

Lincoln, the capital city of Nebraska, is situated in a basin which originally attracted both Indians and whites because of its deposits of salt. However, despite attempts at development beginning in territorial days, no significant commercial returns were realized. This basin was surveyed in 1856, and a decade later the Legislature decided to make this area the new seat of state government. Over objections to removing the capital from Omaha, the city was platted in 1867. It grew slowly until 1870, when completion of a line of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad promoted development. In 1869 the University of Nebraska was established and the cornerstone of its first building laid. Prominent on the skyline is the tower of the Nebraska State Capitol, the third such structure on the site. This building, designed by Bertram Goodhue, was constructed in 1922-32. The innovative design has been widely acclaimed, and the building is designated as a National Historic Landmark. Visible in the middle distance are two large elevators for the collection and storage of grain which suggest the importance of agriculture in Nebraska's economy.

Department of Roads
Nebraska State Historical Society
I-80, Lincoln W-Rest Area, west of 27th, Lincoln
Lancaster County
Marker 257

Art

- Design another symbol to stand atop the Capitol.
- Have students create the Capitol out of clay or draw it and learn about the architecture.
- Compare and contrast architecture of the Nebraska State Capitol building to other state capitol buildings.

Language Arts

- Using the symbol of the sower, have students write a short story about hope.
- Use e-mail to contact a school in Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Describe other symbols found in the Capitol.
- Write to other states about their capitol buildings and capital cities.

Math

- Measure or discover the height of various buildings, then make a picture bar graph to compare the heights.
- Teach the students how to measure using angles.

Physical Education/Health

- Take students on a walk/bike trail.
- Visit the Kennard House, "Toys of That Time" exhibit or the Ferguson House.

Social Studies

- Visit the Unicameral Government, develop a class law using the Unicameral process.
- Burlington Northern Railroad is specific to Lincoln, visit a railroad yard in your area.
- Visit the State Capitol Building.
- Compare the population of Lincoln during different years by making percentage graphs.



- Use the concepts of surveying, past and present, to measure your school playground.
- Discuss the impact of immigration on a community.
- Follow a bill as it begins in committee as it travels through the legislature.
- Use e-mail or fax to contact state senators.

Resources

- Great Plains Trails Network, 5000 North 7th, Lincoln, NE 68521
- Historical Preservation Planner, Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508, 402/441-7491



SEWARD 4TH OF JULY CITY

Since 1868, Seward has, with but few interruptions, sponsored a yearly 4th of July celebration which has gained national attention. This square, the original site of the festival, is today its focal point. Special trains once brought revelers here on the Fourth; today tens of thousands arrive by auto. With community young people having provided impetus for the celebration, Governor Exon in 1973 designated Seward "Nebraska's Official 4th of July City." In 1976 American Revolution Bicentennial officials cited Seward for its patriotic observances.

Named Greene in 1858, this county was rechristened in 1862 for Civil War Secretary of State William H. Seward. Platted in 1868, the city of Seward became the county seat in 1871. It is located at the confluence of the Big Blue River, Plum Creek, and Lincoln Creek. The Neoclassical Revival Courthouse was built in 1905 under supervision of architect George Berlinghof. Eastern farmers first settled the area, but beginning in the 1870's the population became infused with German and Czech elements. The fertile countryside is a diversified farming and livestock feeding area. Concordia Teachers College was established in Seward in 1894.

City of Seward
Seward 4th of July Committee
Nebraska State Historical Society
Southwest corner of Courthouse Square
Seward County
Marker 221

Language Arts

- Write a letter to the Seward Chamber of Commerce for information about the Courthouse. Request a picture. Compare the information you get back with information about your own County Courthouse.
- Write for the 4th of July schedule of activities. Compare and contrast the 4th of July celebration in Seward to the 4th of July in your town.

Math

- You have a budget of \$5000. Using fireworks catalogs, plan the 4th of July fireworks display in Seward next summer. Include: choices of displays, the number of each display (ground or aerial), safety issues involved, licensing, use of Fire Department, etc.

Music

- Make a kazoo and use it to play Yankee Doodle (or other songs relevant to the 4th of July).
- Write a song for the 4th of July.

Physical Education/Health

- Organize and plan a softball game.
- Learn simple square dances.
- Compare and contrast the old fashioned softball to current day ball (ball gloves left on field, etc.).

Science



- Compare the altitude, longitude, weather, size, and latitude of Seward, Nebraska and Seward, Alaska.
- Write a safety plan for Home Fireworks.

Social Studies

- Discover what role baseball had in breaking color barriers in the U.S., Nebraska, and your community.
- Discover the role baseball played in the lives of members of your community from WW I to WW II.
- Compare the native culture of the Pawnee in Nebraska with the Inuit native culture in Alaska.
- Collect the demographic information about the 4th of July guests that visit Seward from across the U.S. Map where all the guests live (contact the Seward Chamber of Commerce).
- Plan and carry out a Pioneer Chautauqua.

General Activities

- Gather 10-15 recipes of German and Czech heritage.
- Bring someone in to make kolaches.
- Sponsor a heritage day.
- Have school lunch program serve a German or Czech Heritage lunch.
- Have parents bring in heritage food items or other artifacts for a Heritage Day.

Resources

- Baseball. Geoffrey Ward and Ken Burns. 1994. Alfred A. Knopf. ISBN O-699-40459-7.
- The Negro Leagues. David Craft. 1993. Crescent Books. ISBN O-517-07342-0.
- Black Diamond. Patricia and Fredrick McKissack. 1994. Scholastic, Inc. ISBN O-590-45812-8.
- Contact the Seward Chamber of Commerce for 4th of July schedule information.
- *Broken Hoops and Plains People* (A Catalog of Ethnic Resources in the Humanities, Nebraska, and Thereabouts). Galen Buller and others. University of Nebraska Press.



SHINN'S FERRY

Moses Shinn and his son Dick began operating Shinn's Ferry across the Platte in 1859. The original site was near Savannah, the first Butler County seat, and a short distance from the present Schuyler bridge. Just above this location the Platte was joined by the Loup River, providing ample water for the operation of a ferry. Farther west, the Platte could be crossed only by fording.

Between 1859-1872, thousands of wagons and travelers crossed at Shinn's Ferry, some en route to Ft. Kearney via the south bank of the Platte, and others representing local traffic between Butler and Colfax counties. Moses Shinn was reportedly a religious man who held daily services for travelers using the ferry.

The original ferry was accidentally destroyed in 1865. A replacement was used until a bridge was constructed at Schuyler in 1872. The demise of Shinn's Ferry, and the removal of the Butler County seat to David City in 1873, doomed the town of Savannah which at one time boasted the courthouse, a hotel, stores, and a blacksmith shop. No traces of Savannah survive today.

Butler County Historical Society
Nebraska State Historical Society
Nebraska 64, 6 miles north, 1/2 mile west of David City
Butler County
Marker 252

Art

- Design a model ferry and then try it out in a sink or bathtub.

Language Arts

- Write a short story describing ferrying or fording a river.
- Have a blacksmith come and share his/her craft with the class.

Math

- Use math to estimate and calculate distances.
- Build, measure, and explore construction of bridges.

Science

- Discuss metallurgy concepts a blacksmith would use.
- Since Savannah no longer exists, discuss information available on ghost towns.

Social Studies

- Research Moses Shinn.
- Locate a map and plot where Savannah was.
- Locate bridges in your area. What affect did the bridges have on the communities?



FAIRMONT ARMY AIR FIELD

Construction began on the Fairmont Army Air Field September 17, 1942. Located east of here, it was one of eleven built in Nebraska during World War II.

The 1,980 acre field began as a satellite of the Topeka Army Air Base. Early in 1943 the name was changed to Fairmont Army Air Field. A short lived training school gave way to the 451st Bombardment Group, which arrived in September 1943. Other groups were the 485th, 504th, 16th, 98th, 467th, and 489th.

Hangers of various sizes housed B-24s, B-17s, and B-29s. Extensive concrete runways and other structures were built. The field had barracks for nearly 6,000 officers and enlisted men. Its 350 bed hospital was the largest in Nebraska.

In September 1944 Lt. Col. Paul Tibbits visited Fairmont and selected the 393rd Bomb Squadron of the 504th to join the 509th Composite Group at Wendover Field, Utah. This group dropped both atomic bombs on Japan.

The field was declared surplus in the spring of 1946.

Nebraska State Historical Society
Fillmore County Historical Society
451st Bombardment Group (H) Ltd.
Robert M. Karstensen, Sr., President
2.5 miles south of Fairmont on Hwy. 81
Fairmont County
Marker 360

Language Arts

- Write Fairmont and find out what has happened to the old air field.
- Write the Fairmont Village Board or Chamber of Commerce for a schedule of the ol' Settler's Day (threshing activities).
- Find out why the air field was located at Fairmont; where they got the people to man the airfield.

Math

- How many football fields would fit into the Fairmont Army Air Field?
- How many square miles are in 1,980 acres?
- What would the runway cost if made of concrete?

Physical Education/Health

- Design and set up an obstacle course resembling soldier's basic training.
- Collect information on martial arts and host a demonstration in class.
- Practice parachute activities.
- Discuss skills necessary for skydiving. Invite in a demonstrator.

Science

- Research the planes of the time that would have flown into that air strip.



- Fly a flight simulator computer program.
- Plan runway construction with various types of materials and compare costs.

Social Studies

- Discover other WW II related sites: POW prison camps in Atlanta, Nebraska and Indianola, concrete bunkers in Hastings, and many others.
- Compile and use archival information from WW II vets for future.
- Watch a WW II movie (Midway or SEABEE).
- Use CD rom information about WW II or planes.
- Compile family history dealing with WW II adding all above related information to local county historical societies and school libraries.
- Arrange for a display of military uniforms and memorabilia.
- Have a recruiter visit your class.
- Invite the National Guard to visit with a helicopter.

Resources

- Nebraska Trailblazer No. 21 (Nebraska State Historical Society)
- World War II Vet (Video tape interviews)



MORMON TRAIL

For thousands of Mormons, the great pioneer trail along the north bank of the Platte which paralleled the river about a mile south of here was an avenue of escape from persecution and a roadway to a new life.

Brigham Young led the first mass migration over the Mormon Trail to the Great Salt Lake in 1847. The north bank of the Platte was chosen to avoid contact with the travelers on the heavily-used Oregon Trail that follows the south bank of the river from near Kearney westward. Among the expeditions which followed, were several so poor that pioneers walked and pulled handcarts.

The trail became one of the great roadways to the west, used by Mormons, military expeditions, gold seekers and settlers.

The completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869 ended extensive use of the trail as the railroad tracks followed essentially this same route. Today, the Lincoln Highway (Highway 30) follows this great roadway to the west.

Historical Land Mark Council
Junction of US 30 and Nebraska 92
Merrick County
Marker 6

Art

- Design/make a handcart similar to those used by the Mormons.
- Make a scrapbook of walking field trips (poems, maps, sketches, and stories).

Language Arts

- Research and write journals about the western movement on the Mormon Trail.
- Have the students read, I Walked to Zion by Susan Madsen (true stories of young pioneers on the Mormon Trail).

Math

- Calculate length of trail across Nebraska.
- Compare supplies cost building handcarts from then to now.
- Handcarts to Zion by Leroy R. and Ann W. Hafen, University of NE Press: Lincoln, NE, page 179.

Music

- See handcart song on back of above mentioned pamphlet.
- Use Mormon Tabernacle Choir music.

Physical Education/Health

- In the nutrition unit. include the importance of water to the body and the thirst people endured along the trail.
- Discuss safety along the trail. Children were run over by carts and wagons—leading cause of accidental death for kids. Relate to current events for safety in riding bicycles.



- The odometer idea came from the Mormons by tying a piece of material to wagon wheel. Have students enter the gym running/walking at own pace. Use a laser doorbell for counting laps. After five minutes, total laps and divide by the number that equal a mile. Have each class select its own state and earn bonus miles for answering questions about it. After the students cross the state, have a free day where the students choose the activity.
- How did pioneers figure out their directions (i.e., orienteering, compass work, stars)?

Science

- Using paper collected on a walk, explore the process of making paper.
- Discuss how travelers were affected by climate changes along the way (i.e., dust storms and heat/cold).

Social Studies

- Research reasons for Mormon emigration to Utah.
- Why did they travel in military fashion (they organized walkers along the trail in groups of 100s, 50s and 10s)?
- Research transportation evolution (how one mode makes a previous one extinct).
- Resource: Pamphlet on Mormon Trail from the National Park Service, Department of Interior, Nebraska Department of Tourism
- Resource: Mormon Handcarts by Latter Day Saints, contact Mormon Day Trails Association, Shauna Valentine, 2660 Park Avenue, Lincoln NE 68502 402/476-7450.



THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

The Lincoln Highway Association, formed in 1913 to build a New York-to-San Francisco highway, sold "highway memberships" to raise funds for the project. In Nebraska the road, which traversed twelve states, extended westward from Iowa along the Platte Valley route earlier used by emigrants, and followed the mainline Union Pacific Railroad into Wyoming.

The section of highway east of Grand Island was started in December, 1914, and an experimental paved mile was completed in 1915. Here, near the center of the transcontinental route, work began quickly because of strong public sponsorship. As the road was built, it was marked by red, white, and blue banded utility posts, three to a mile. In 1928 three thousand concrete markers were erected, each bearing a bronze medallion of the head of Abraham Lincoln.

Completed in 1927, the Lincoln Highway, the prototype transcontinental route designed for automobile traffic, stimulated highway improvement. It later became federally marked U.S. Highway 30. In the 1950-1960s Interstate 80 was built to carry east-west traffic through Nebraska. Though I-80 parallels the Lincoln Highway route in many counties, the older route continues as a part of the federal highway network.

Hall County Historical Society
Nebraska State Historical Society
Pioneer Park, West Second & Cleburn Sts., Grand Island
Hall County
Marker 255

Physical Education/Health

- Develop and organize a Lincoln Highway Run using red, white, and blue theme, and names of major highways of early 1900's. (Finishers could receive a bronze medallion with a bust of Lincoln on it, or as an alternative, a penny). Simulation activity at the local level would include highway markers in place at turns and intersections.
- Pick up a penny at each check point on the Lincoln Highway run.

Math

- Compute time required for a trip planned above in social studies section using speed limit of 1927.
- Compare that time to interstate time travel on the Lincoln Highway to today.

Science

- Discover the cities on the Lincoln Highway that cranes pass over on their migration each spring?
- Measure the Lincoln Highway across the United States and give the ratio of Nebraska to the total miles.
- Trace the Lincoln Highway across the United States and compare altitudes from one state to another.

Social Studies

- Plan an itinerary for a trip on the Lincoln Highway. Include departure point, destination, stops, sleepovers, food breaks, lodging, and attractions to stop and see along the way. Use travel agency as a resource.



- Using a Nebraska Map, highlight the highway and compare it to I-80. Compare the distance and time taken to travel across Nebraska when using one or the other.
- Compare the advantages and disadvantages to travel on Lincoln Highway and I-80.
- Compare construction efforts, plans, costs, etc. of Lincoln Highway and I-80.
- Do the two previous activities comparing to train travel of yesterday and today.
- Determine what towns prospered from the Lincoln Highway and then suffered from construction of I-80.
- Determine what kinds of businesses did well from the construction of the Lincoln Highway (motels, gas stations, mom and pop businesses) and lost business due to I-80.

Resources



THE OREGON TRAIL

The most traveled of the overland routes passed this point on its way to the great Platte Valley, highway to the west. The Oregon Trail started from Independence, followed the Kansas River west, and then the Little Blue north into Nebraska. It crossed this divide to reach the Platte near Fort Kearny.

In the 1830's trappers and missionaries recognized the Platte Valley as a natural roadway. The first wagon train followed the 2,000 mile trail to Oregon in 1841.

An estimated quarter of a million travelers used this route in the twenty-five years after those first wagons. Moving slowly, only 10 to 20 miles a day on the three-month trip, thousands of hooves, shoes, and wheels pounded a wide trail into the prairie sod.

Oregon was an early goal. The '49'ers went this way to California. Settlers, stage coaches, freighting wagons, Pony Express riders, and military expeditions all used this prairie highway.

With completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869, this route fell into disuse, but the Oregon Trail had earned a permanent place in our history.

Historical Land Mark Council
West of Hastings on U.S. 6
Adams County
Marker 9

Math

- Load and pack 4x12 wagon (48 square feet was all they had in which to pack all their belongings). Tape that size (4x12) on the floor so the kids can visualize it and let them plan what they would have wanted to take along.
- Calculate the distance covered by a rotation of the wagon wheel. Determine how many rotations were made in one day on the trail.

Physical Education/Health

- Relate the natural foods eaten along the way to today's processed foods (i.e., "salt pork," preservatives).
- Discuss sanitation issues (i.e., bathrooms, soap, water, etc.).
- Do an activity on the school track and compare the ease of being active on an already developed trail to the difficulty the pioneer experienced. Take a hike on an undeveloped trail near the school for comparison of ease of travel.

Science

- Discuss the significance of the Continental Divide.
- Study the impact of the buffalo for Native Americans.
- Explore the ecosystem in your area.
- Discuss the affect disease had on the pioneer.



Social Studies

- Make models or drawings of prairie schooners, conestoga wagons, stage coaches, and freighting wagons.
- Discover and discuss the reasons for differences and why the schooner was chosen by westward travelers.
- Trace the Oregon Trail on a map.
- Report about weapons used by pioneers on the Oregon Trail
- Research and discuss disease and its affect on the Native American tribes
- Create a papier-mache map including the natural landmarks met by pioneers along the way.

Resource

- Oregon Trail National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior
- Centennial, James Michener. ISBN O-449-21419-2.
- My Folks Came in a Covered Wagon, Roote and Huff, ed. 1991. Capper Press, Topeka, KS. ISBN O-941678-13-x.



KEARNEY/FORT KEARNY

For the next fifty miles east-bound travelers will be passing from the semi-arid Great Plains into the country of eastern Nebraska. Near here are located the city of Kearney and Fort Kearny, for which it was named. The fort was established in 1847 and continued in use until 1871.

Fort Kearny was built at a point where eastern trails joined to form the Great Platte River Road to the West. Thousands of overland travelers passed by the fort each year. The U.S. Army was sent here not only to aid and protect the emigrants but also to protect the Indian tribes in the region from the travelers and to prevent inter-tribal warfare. Numerous road ranches were established near the fort. One notorious outfitting point nearby was Dobytown, which also attracted pleasure-seeking soldiers.

Several military expeditions against hostile Indians were garrisoned at this post during the 1860's, when the Sioux and Cheyenne made many raids against wagon trains and Union Pacific Railroad construction crews. Once the railroad was built and settlers entered the area, the need for the post lessened, and it was abandoned. Today it is a State Historical Park and is entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Department of Roads
Nebraska State Historical Society
Kearny Rest Area, I-80 E
Buffalo County
Marker 200

Language Arts

- Follow the diary of Elijah Bryan Farnham, recording significant experiences on the trail and reactions to them.
- Write a personal journal, i.e., "My Life on the Trail."
- Resource: Nebraska Trailblazer Vol. 1, No. 3 March, 1988 (Nebraska State Historical Society)

Physical Education/Health

- Go for a hike or nature walk. Discover how many birds you see or discuss what it was like for the pioneers to actually create trails.
- Take a walk and take molds or castings of prints and tracks.

Science

- Map the flight patterns during migration of Sandhill Cranes.
- On the nature walks above, listen for sounds of nature (have a specific listening station set up).
- Resource: Research the Sandhill Crane: migration patterns, stay in Nebraska, habitat required.
- Resource: Stewards of the Platte (308/382-5221)
- Resource: The Oregon Trail--A Photographic Journey by Bill and Jan Moeller pp. 36-37 for pictures of Fort Kearny
- Resource: Nebraska Game and Parks Project Wild Book

Social Studies

- Build a miniature fort model (or draw, design, etc.) including the stockade and total fort area and buildings outside the stockade.



- Resource: Nebraska History, Vol. 44, No. 2, 1963.
- Take a camping trip to the Fort Kearny State Recreational Area
- Using the Nebraska map, give directions to someone wanting to get to Fort Kearny from your community.
- Research the purposes for the building of Fort Kearny.
- Resource: Indiana Magazine of History Vol. XLVI Sept. 1950 No. 3 pg. 304-305. This is from a diary of Elijah Bryan Farnham who traveled the Oregon-California Trail in 1849, a relative of William Jennings Bryan.



THE 100TH MERIDIAN

The 100th Meridian is the 100th longitudinal line west of Greenwich, England which was set by Congress as a major goal in building the first transcontinental railroad. Construction of the Union Pacific reached the Meridian on October 5, 1866. The first passenger train brought 250 notables, including railroad and territorial officials, congressmen and newspapermen to celebrate the event here on October 26, 1866. A large wooden sign designating "The 100th Meridian, 247 miles west of Omaha," which stood close to the track for many years, was replaced in 1933 by the Cozad Chapter of D. A. R.

In 1879 Major John Wesley Powell in his report for the United States Geological Survey recognized the 100th Meridian as the natural demarcation line between the humid east and the arid west. Evaporation from the gulf waters supplies most of the rainfall for the eastern half of the United States. West of this line precipitation, which comes largely from the Pacific, is insufficient for agricultural needs without irrigation. Here on the 100th Meridian the humid East meets the arid West.

Cozad Chamber of Commerce
Historical Land Mark Council
US 30, in Cozad
Dawson County
Marker 17

Math

- Develop graphs using the longitude/latitude concept.

Physical Education/Health

- Have children keep a logbook of their physical activity to give them a perspective of how long it would take to cover six miles (the miles between longitude lines).

Science

- Compare and contrast weather and topography in Nebraska, east and west of the 100th Meridian.
- Bring in a surveyor to explain and demonstrate equipment.
- Survey the school playground.
- Develop experiments to discover humidity and evaporation.

Social Studies

- Locate the 100th Meridian between humid east and arid west in an atlas.
- Place the longitude and latitude lines on a Nebraska map.
- Explore the impact of the railroad to your community.
- Locate other cities that are located on the 100th Meridian.
- Play "Battleship" using simple grid maps marked as latitude and longitude.
- Discover the differences in crops raised in the state from east to west. Map the findings and answer the question: Does the 100th Meridian appear to be a point of difference?"
- Discover the areas of the state that irrigation plays a major role. What types of irrigation—pivot or gravity—are used and where are they used? Map the findings.
- Plan an event that would bring 250 "notables" to your town. Describe the event, develop a schedule for the day, and tell who the 250 notables would be. Would they come by train? If not, how?



Resources

- Nebraska Department of Agriculture
- Local Natural Resource Districts



SIoux LOOKOUT

Sioux Lookout, the highest point in Lincoln County, was a prominent landmark on the overland trails. From its lofty summit the development of the West unfolded before the eyes of the Sioux and other Indians. Trappers and traders came by here in 1813, the first wagon train in 1830, and the first missionary in 1834. In 1836 Narcissa Whitman and Elizabeth Spalding became the first white women to travel the trail. During the Indian War of 1864-1865, its prominence gave a clear view of troop and Indian movements below.

Gold seekers en route to California, homesteaders seeking free land in the West and a religious people seeking a haven in Utah--all are part of the history of this valley. Here echoed the hooves of the Pony Express. From 1840 to 1866 some 2,500,000 people traveled the valley, engraving into the sod a wide, deep trail. Indians called the route "The Great Medicine Road of the Whites."

In 1869 the transcontinental railroad was completed, ending much of the trail travel. Yet even today, the valley with its ribbons of concrete remains the Great Platte River Road to the West.

Rural Youth of This Area
Historical Land Mark Council
southeast of North Platte
Lincoln County
Marker 89

Art

- Design pottery, pictographs, bead work, etc. of the Sioux or Pawnee culture.

Language Arts

- Write letters portraying prairie life of this era to be sent by Pony Express and determine time taken to reach the destination.
- Keep a journal of the Indian War of 1864-65 from the perspective of the Native American and/or the soldier.
- Develop a sign language to discuss events of the past or the present (example: the Sioux and Pawnee used sign language to communicate).
- Resources: U.S. Mail System Pony Express Station at Gothenburg, Nebraska; Pony Express Museum, St. Joseph, MO; and Rock Creek Station State Park, Fairbury, MO

Math

- Estimate how long it would take to climb Sioux Lookout.
- Estimate how far you can see from Sioux Lookout in all directions.
- Compare Sioux population with Pawnee population before 1831 and after the 1831 smallpox epidemic.
- Compare population of Nebraska in 1980 (1,569,825) to number of travelers going over the trails between 1840-1866 (2.5 million).
- Compare that number to the number of people attending a Nebraska football game in Lincoln (76,000).
- How many Nebraska filled stadiums would it take to fit the 2.5 million people who traveled the trail?



- Find your town's population. How many of your town would it take to make up the 2.5 million people who traveled the trail?
- Compare Nebraska's population to the number of people traveling through Nebraska each year (check Nebraska Tourism office).
- Using an almanac, find some cities with populations of 2.5 million.
- Resource: Buffalo Bill Cody House and Ranch in North Platte–Scout's Rest Ranch; Trailblazer Vol. I, No. I October, 1987 (Nebraska State Historical Society); Nebraska Trailblazer, No. 16 Red Cloud and Sioux Nation; Nebraska State Historical Society; Dances With Wolves Movie: excerpt on Buffalo Hunt

Music

- Native American Dances and Costumes demonstrations
- View videos of Pow Wows (Resource Center: Indian Center in Lincoln, Nebraska).

Physical Education/Health

- Pony Express Relay around the school. Pass off letters rather than batons.
- Identify women "firsts" in various sports.
- Homework: Pony Express homework assignments where children take turns taking the saddle bag home

Science

- Rattlesnake Activities
- Compare weight of gold to other metals.
- Compare and contrast the terrain, soil, plants, and vegetation of the Pawnee area in Eastern Nebraska to the Sioux Lookout area in Lincoln County (Resource: County Extension Educators).

Social Studies

- Compare lifestyles of the Pawnee to that of the Sioux (include clothing, nomadic life vs. farming life, housing, hunting, allies, food) through use of cooperative groups.
- Compare the geographic area of the Sioux to other tribes in Nebraska.
- Compare elevation of Sioux Lookout to highest and lowest points in Nebraska.
- Give directions to someone to Sioux Lookout from North Platte or Brady.
- Compare elevation of Sioux Lookout to elevation of Chimney Rock or Scotts Bluff.
- Using crumpled, then reflatened brown paper sacks for a buffalo skin, develop a picture story. Choose an actual historical event, imaginary story from the past, or a present-day adventure.
- Discuss how and why buffalo were referred to as "the walking department store" for Native Americans.
- Compare mail sent by Pony Express, U.S. Mail and E-mail in terms of cost, travel time, etc.



Resources

- Indians of the Plains. Robert H. Lowie. University of Nebraska Press. 1982. ISBN 0-8032-7907-8.
- North American Indian Sign Language. Karen Liptak. Scholastic, Inc. 1990. ISBN 0-590-50829-6.
- The Pawnee Indians. George E. Hyde. University of Oklahoma Press. 1974. ISBN 0-8061-2094-0.
- These Were the Sioux. Mari Sandoz. University of Nebraska Press. 1961. ISBN 0-8032-9151-5.



COWBOY CAPITAL

Named for the Oglala band of Dakota Sioux and located on the Union Pacific Railroad, Ogallala was a lusty cowtown of the Old West. From 1875 to 1885 it was a wild woolly cowboy capital where gold flowed across the gaming tables, liquor across the bar, and often blood across the floor.

As farmers settled eastern Oklahoma and Kansas, they discovered the famous Chisholm Trail, forcing the herds westward, and the Western or Texas Trail through Dodge City to Ogallala was established. From Ogallala, Texas cattle were shipped East or sold to ranchers from Nebraska, Montana, Wyoming, Dakota, and Colorado. Indian agencies and mining camps provided an early market for Ogallala beef.

Ogallala, the cowtown, was a lively and colorful segment of the American West and the chief gateway to the newly opened ranges of the northern plains. By 1884 the trail driving days were virtually ended and the Old West and Ogallala turned to other ways of life. Cattle remain an important factor in the area along with farming, hydroelectric power and industry.

Ogallala Chamber of Commerce
Historic Land Mark Council
US Hwy 30, City Park, Ogallala
Keith County
Marker 5

Art

- Examine styles of Western Artists (Remington, Russell)
- Draw a typical cattle trail cowboy

Language Arts

- Keep a diary as though you were a cattle trail cowboy.
- Write a cowboy poem.
- Write a drama of a Saturday night in Ogallala when the cattle drive arrives.
- Write, perform, or attend a western melodrama.
- Write a song encompassing poems from cowboy poets of today.

Math

- Compute the distance from the origin to the final destination of the trail.

Music

- Sing cowboy/trail songs.
- Write your own cowboy song.

Physical Education/Health

- Conduct a Hoedown—western dancing, square dancing, line dancing, two-step.
- Invite someone to do a dance demonstration.
- Have a Bicycle Rodeo.



- Have a Buffalo or Cow Chip Throwing Contest.

Science

- Compare and contrast the cattle of the trail days with current breeding of cattle.
- How has the total industry changed from the open range days to the feed lots of today?
- Compare feed of the range animal with feed of the feed lot animal.

Social Studies

- Answer questions such as: Why were cattle driven out of Texas? Why did the trail's end keep moving west with passing if time?
- Compare the route of the Ogallala Trail to routes of other cattle trails such as Chisholm, Abilene, etc.

Resources

- Resource: Nebraska Trailblazer No. 8 Ranching (Nebraska State Historical Society)
- Resource: Nebraska Art Museum at Kearney Resource: The Oregon Trail—A Photographic Journey by Bill and Jan Moeller from the perspective of a cattle driver.
- Research the Nebraska cattle industry of today from hoof to hook.
- Resource: Iowa Beef Processors, Monfort, Nebraska Cattleman's Association, Farm Bureau, Nebraska Beef Council—UNL Extension Educators would network for you.
- Resource: TNN television, KRVN radio, Lexington, NE
- Research the Can Can dance.
- Resource: Lonesome Dove video (show excerpts)
- Resource: Speaker on rodeos
- Resource: Local rancher or feed lot operator



TEXAS TRAIL

After the Civil War, herds of Texas cattle were driven north to marketing points in eastern Nebraska, but settlement by homesteaders forced the trail further west each year. Beginning in 1875, Union Pacific selected Ogallala as its main shipping point. During the following decade, thousands of longhorn cattle were trailed through Perkins County, in the vicinity of this marker.

Beginning in Texas the trail turned northward through the Indian Territory into western Kansas. From Dodge City on the Arkansas River, the trail continued to Buffalo Station, Kansas, entering Nebraska in Hitchcock County. The hardest day's drive for the trail-weary men and cattle was the 30 miles from the head of Stinking Water Creek in southeast Perkins County to Ogallala on the South Platte; it was the longest and driest drive of the trip.

In 1876 over 60,000 Texas cattle were driven over the trail, and between 1879 and 1884 over 100,000 cattle made the trip each year, with the last great drive occurring in 1884. Due to settlement in the counties to the south, as well as in Perkins County, the last drives were made through the western part of the county.

Perkins County Historical Society
Nebraska State Historical Society
Nebraska Hwy. 61 (east of Madrid)
Perkins County
Marker 128

Art

- Research and design cattle brands.

Economics

- Discuss why they needed to drive the cattle to railroads and what the railroad destination was for the cattle.
- Discuss supply and demand of beef packing plants.

Music

- Sing trail songs.

Physical Education/Health

- Square dance.
- Learn rope tricks and roping skills.

Science

- Have a local cattleman visit and discuss longhorns and cattle breeding of the past, present, and future.
- Have someone describe a typical “branding” day on a ranch.

Social Studies

- Discover the purpose of brands on animals. Where in Nebraska are brands required?



- Discuss cowboys, clothing, keeping in mind the multicultural aspects (many aspects of cowboys were originally Mexican).
- Discuss open range concept, i.e., ranches.
- Role play with regard to rustlers, crime, punishment, and law enforcement.
- Resource: Invite someone with a different cultural background to bring traditional dress and perhaps help discuss how it was in the 1800's for their culture.
- Discover why Nebraska communities have packing plants and how those have impacted the population and culture of those communities (i.e., Omaha, Grand Island, Lexington).
- Resource: Nebraska Brand Committee, Alliance, NE
- Resource: We Pointed Them North. Teddy Blue Abbott.



WINDLASS HILL PIONEER HOMESTEAD

The stones surrounding this marker are the remains of the homestead dwelling of Reverend Dennis B. Clary, a pioneer Methodist Minister, who received final patent for his homestead May 22, 1899. Mr. Clary was born September 1st, 1822, in Maryland and immigrated to Nebraska in 1885. Using a horse drawn cart fashioned from available materials, he hauled stone to this site for a two room house. For years this was a land mark in Ash Hollow and marked the location of Windlass Hill. It was a popular stopping place for settlers traveling from the North Platte Valley area to the railroad at Big Springs, some twenty miles to the south.

The wagon road used at that time is still visible nearby. The Oregon Trail passed here, and the area surrounding the house was used by early travelers to repair damages caused by the hazardous trip down Windlass Hill.

This site was used July 29 - 30, 1967, as the stage setting for the "Ash Hollow Centennial Pageant" where a nearby sod house was reconstructed. Funds from this successful historical event provided this marker.

Ash Hollow Centennial Association
Nebraska State Historical Society
US 26, 5 1/2 miles east of Lewellen
Garden County
Marker 130

Art

- Create sod houses using like materials to those actually used in the 1800's.
- Study housing of this time in relationship to the environment.

Language Arts

- Introduce the legends and facts of how wagons came down slope.
- Research what drew Dennis B. Clary to Nebraska.

Math

- Calculate the number of years after the first Oregon travelers passed through that Clary established his homestead.

Physical Education/Health

- Run, climb steps, or run hills to simulate travel up/down Windlass Hill.

Science

- Research how you apply for a patent.
- Examine and discuss the water sources in your area.
- Present different fuel sources that were used by the pioneers.
- Discuss the impact of recycling on today's environment.
- Plan/invent a different way to travel down Windlass Hill.



Social Studies

- Trace history of Ash Hollow as a historical marker/park area.



JOHN HOLLMAN GRAVE

It has been estimated that at least 20,000 persons died on the overland trail, between 1842 and 1859. This averages ten graves per mile over the 2,000 mile trail. Of the hundreds who died while crossing Nebraska only seven identifiable graves remain.

Most trail graves had crude wooden or animal-bone markers. A very few had formal stones or iron wagon wheel rims. The nearby grave of John Hollman, like others in Western Nebraska, was marked by a roughly fashioned local rock. Though most of the others have disappeared, Hollman's still stands, its crude lettering giving his name and that he died in June 1852.

Many overland travelers died from accidents, while a few were killed by Indians. The great majority died from disease. Asiatic cholera was the main killer, coming up the Mississippi from New Orleans. Parties crossing Missouri spread it across the Plains. It is not known how John Hollman died, but 1852 was a very bad cholera year and numerous deaths were recorded in this vicinity. Wagon ruts are still visible in parts of Garden County. Local rock formations were commented upon by many diarists. These remain today as a part of our historical heritage. The adjacent directional stone marker has been moved from its original site.

Historical Society of Garden County
Nebraska State Historical Society
Hwy, 27, south of Oshkosh
Garden County
Marker 246

Art

- Design your own headstone.
- Do headstone rubbings.

Home Economics

- Cook foods that were conducive to trail travel.

Language Arts

- Write your own epithet (what do you want to be known or remembered for?).
- Diary or journal your feelings at losing a loved one on the trail.
- Play the Oregon Trail Computer Simulation game

Math

- Compute the average deaths per year on Oregon Trail vs. average deaths per year on Nebraska Highways.
- Calculate how many graves we have passed so far on our *Walk Though Nebraska History*.

Physical Education/Health

- Have children look at their own immunization records, and research causes of deaths of ancestors.
- Participate in activities to prevent heart disease, the most common cause of death today.
- Overview modern techniques to prevent disease.
- Compare and contrast diseases of 1850's with 1990's.



- Hike to the local cemetery and find graves of 1850's.
- Do an aerobic activity of choice and check heart rate, etc.
- Conduct a health fair.
- Keep track of number of injuries in school for one week (see nurses's records) and compare to deaths on the trail.

Science

- Describe water treatments of today and the relationship to prevention of cholera.
- What diseases can be contacted from untreated water?
- Conduct water purification experiments.
- Gather tap water, purified water, river water and pond water. Compare water through naked eye and microscope.
- Discuss erosion factors with "ruts": cattle, bicycle, walking paths, machinery. What do they tell us about traffic patterns and how they impact the landscape and environment?

Social Studies/Cemetery Activities

- Take a walk through a cemetery and do the following:
 - Rubbing of headstone.
 - Looking for epithets.
 - Finding oldest grave/gravestone.
 - Youngest/oldest age at death.
 - Looking for patterns such as many deaths at same time period; deaths from wars.
 - Symbols on headstones.
 - Causes of death.
 - Styles and shapes of markers.
 - Marker materials.
 - Research cemetery records (local historical society, county records, village records).
 - Ethnic name patterns from various decades.



CHIMNEY ROCK

No single sight along the Oregon and Mormon trails attracted more attention than Chimney Rock, 1 1/2 miles south of here. Rising 475 feet above the Platte River, the natural tower served as beacon to pioneers.

Tired travelers described it in many ways during the three to four days it was part of their horizon. For some it created mirage-like effects. Some judged it to be 50 feet high, others 700. Many tried to scale it, but none succeeded. Later it became the setting for pony express, telegraph, and stage stations.

Many pioneers speculated on the fragility of the tower. They feared the Brule clay with inter-layers of volcanic ash and Arikaree sandstone would soon crumble to nothingness on the prairie.

Hundreds of names were scratched on the soft base. The names have washed away, but the tower remains, as do references in faded diaries that attest Chimney Rock was one of the celebrated landmarks on the pioneer trunklines to the west.

Historical Markers Council (credit line)
Southwest of Bayard on Nebraska 92
Morrill County
Marker 1

Art

- Do a charcoal pencil sketch of Chimney Rock.
- Examine Native artwork (i.e., scratches in stone–sandstone, sketching the rock, and brule clay).
- Construct dimensional models of chimney rock/Scottsbluff.

Language Arts

- Discuss idioms–“seeing the elephant” to describe Chimney Rock.
- Read journal diaries regarding references to Chimney Rock.
- Give examples of similes with reference to Chimney Rock, “like a steeple on a church,” other examples in book, The Great Platte River Road by Merril Mattes (available at State Historical Society).

Math

- Estimate height/geometry of Chimney Rock.
- Compare the original height to the current height.

Physical Education/Health

- Invite a guest speaker to discuss outdoor survival skills (i.e., demonstrate wall climbing/ rock climbing).

Science

- Research how a mirage is formed.
- Do experiment with erosion.



Social Studies

- Role play the significance of the pioneer discovering Chimney Rock and adjacent landmarks.
- Discuss the way people leave marks as travelers did at Chimney Rock. Compare and contrast when it is right and when it is wrong.
- Determine what your “landmarks” are today when you travel from: home to school, your town to the next largest town, and your state to another state of your choice.



COURTHOUSE AND JAIL ROCKS

Courthouse and Jail Rocks are two of the most famous landmarks of westward migration. Nearby passed the Oregon-California Trail, the Mormon Trail, the Pony Express Trail and the Sidney-Deadwood Trail. The rocks were vanguards of unforgettable scenic wonders that travelers would encounter farther west, including Chimney Rock's curious spire and the rugged heights of Scott's Bluffs.

Hundreds of overland emigrants mentioned Courthouse Rock in their diaries. Often called a "castle" or "solitary tower," the name Courthouse was first used in 1837. One 1845 traveler described the rock as "resembling the ruins of an old castle [which] rises abruptly from the plain. . . . It is difficult to look upon it and not believe that art had something to do with its construction. The voyagers have called it the Courthouse; but it looks infinitely more like the Capitol."

Courthouse and Jail Rocks, rising some 400 feet above the North Platte Valley, are erosional remnants composed of clay, sandstone and volcanic ash. The rocks are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in the Nebraska Natural Areas Register.

Nebraska State Historical Society
3/10 mile north of Seybolt Park on Nebraska 88
Morrill County
Marker 371

Art

- Does Courthouse Rock look like a courthouse? What would you name it?
- Draw or design a Courthouse Rock.

Language Arts

- Research legend of Pawnee being trapped by the Sioux on Courthouse Rock. (Resource: Nebraska Old & New by A.E. Sheldon pp. 163- 165; out-of-print access through inter-library loan)
- Looking at Court House and Jail Rock, come up with a mythical or imaginary story about how the two were formed.
- Find pioneer journal entries about these landmarks and share the stories.

Math

- How far away could emigrants see Courthouse and Jail Rocks?
- How far in miles were Courthouse and Jail Rocks from the trail?

Physical Education/Health

- Go on a hike; pick up rocks; sort and count by size, shape, type, etc.
- Draw to scale on the gym wall Courthouse and Jail Rocks in relation to the height of the school.
- Simulate a 400 foot climb.
- How many football fields tall is 400 feet?
- Take a 400 foot walk. How long does it take? Would it take the same amount, longer or shorter to make the climb?
- Wear a pedometer all day and discover how far you walk in an average day.
- Compare the above to how far one would walk on a pioneer trail per day.



Science

- Research how scientists think Courthouse and Jail Rocks were formed.
- Come up with a plan to tell how far the wagons traveled each day on the trail.
- Devise another way to compute mileage.

Resource

- Nebraska Trailblazer March 1988 Vol. 1 No. 3 (Nebraska State Historical Society)



THE HORSE CREEK TREATY

From all directions they came in late summer 1851--Plains Indian tribes, summoned by government officials so their chiefs could smoke the peace pipe and sign a treaty with representatives of "The Great Father." Never before had so many American Indians assembled to parley with the white man (estimates range from 8,000 to 12,000). It was perhaps history's most dramatic demonstration of the Plains tribes' desire to live at peace with the whites.

The tribes had been invited to assemble at Fort Laramie, but a shortage of forage for their thousands of horses caused the parley to be moved downstream. Because some tribes had been at war for generations, most Indian camps were widely spaced to minimize contact. About 270 soldiers were present to help keep the peace. However, a spirit of friendliness prevailed.

Among those helping bring the tribes together were mountain man and trailblazer Jim Bridger and Jesuit Father Peter De Smet, the beloved "Blackrobe" who worked 50 years among the Indians.

Nebraska State Historical Society
One mile west of Morrill on U.S. 26
Scotts Bluff County
Marker 369A

THE HORSE CREEK TREATY

The treaty was proposed by former fur trader Thomas Fitzpatrick, Upper Platte Indian agent, supported by David D. Mitchell, superintendent of Indian Affairs in St. Louis. The treaty provided that the government would give the tribes \$50,000 a year in goods for 50 years for damages caused by emigrants bound for Oregon, California and Utah. In return the Indians would allow free passage on the emigrant trails, permit forts to be built on their land, and pledged peaceful settlement of intertribal disputes.

Signing were such chiefs as White Antelope (Cheyenne), Little Owl (Arapaho), Big Robber (Crow) and Conquering Bear, whom the whites persuaded the Sioux to elect as head chief. Assiniboine, Mandan, Gros Ventre and Arikara chiefs also signed. The Shoshone traveled over 400 miles but were not asked to sign because they were not from the Plains.

With few exceptions, the tribes honored the treaty until 1864, when the whites' demand for land pressured the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho into warfare, ending the hope for peace which had prompted "The Great Smoke."

Nebraska State Historical Society
One mile west of Morrill on U.S. 26
Scotts Bluff County
Marker 369B

THE HORSE CREEK TREATY--MAP

(Legend under map)

Beyond the tree line about 2-3/4 miles in front of this marker, Horse Creek flows into the North Platte River. There the treaty was signed September 17, 1851. Officially known as The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, it is commonly called The Horse Creek Treaty.

Nebraska State Historical Society
One mile west of Morrill on U.S. 26
Scotts Bluff County
Marker 369C



Language Arts

- Write a letter to request a copy of the treaty from UNL Love Library or the State Historical Society.
- Using adjectives and nouns for Native American names “little owl,” “sitting bull,” come up with five new names.
- Group creative writing: Compare the concept of bringing “warring” tribes together for a peace treaty to a contemporary event (gangs) “The Great Smoke”.

Map

- Locate tribes on the U.S. map.

Math

- \$50,000 then = _____ now? (How much was government prepared to pay? Research the history of banks. Check 1860’s newspapers.)

Physical Education/Health

- Have Native American Dance demonstration in class.
- The Great Smoke–tie into alcohol/smoking unit (the Great Smoke Out)
- Problem solving/conflict resolution
- Resource: Nebraska Department of Health, Section of Health Promotion and Education–Tobacco
- Resource: Cancer Society

Social Studies

- Research Indian Agents. What former professions were agents from? Why would one want to become an agent (present both good and bad reasons).
- Research certain treaties, such as the Treaty of 1851. What promises were kept? What promises were broken?
- Research which government department the Bureau of Indian Affairs was a branch of and then answer the question, “Did it make them more or less effective in helping Indians than being part of the War Department?”
- Reenact the peace pipe ceremony.
- Invite a Native American from the Indian Center visit class and give his/her perspective on the treaties.
- Find and categorize Native American names.
- Resource: Centennial. James Michener.
- Resource: Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West. LeRoy Hafen and Francis Young. University of Nebraska Press. 1984. ISBN 0-8032-7223-5.
- Resource: Indian War of 1864. Captain Eugene F. Ware. University of Nebraska Press.



GENERAL RESOURCES

Battle of the Bridges by Rex Gerwan and Russ Gzapkowski.

Centennial. James Michener. ISBN 0-449-21419-2.

Colonial America Cooperative Learning Activities. Mary Strohl and Susan Schneck. Scholastic. 1991. ISBN 0-590-49133-4.

The Great Platte River Road. Merrill J. Mattes. University of Nebraska Press. 1992. ISBN 0-8032-8153-6.

If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon. Ellen Levine. Illustrated by Elroy Freem. Scholastic. ISBN 0-590-45158-8.

I Walked to Zion. Susan Madsen.

If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon.

Indians of the Plains. Robert H. Lowie. University of Nebraska Press. 1982. ISBN 0-8032-7907-8.

Make It Work! North American Indians. Andrew Haslam & Alexandra Parsons. Two-Can Book. Thomson Learning, Publisher. 1995. ISBN 1 56847-137-8.

Mormons Time line.

My Folks Came in a Covered Wagon, Roote and Huff, ed. 1991. Capper Press, Topeka, KS. ISBN 0-941678-13-x.

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Nebraska: A Geography (Westview Geographies of the United States). Bradley H. Baltensperger (out of print—source through inter-library loan). Westview Press. 1985. ISBN 0-86531-218-4.

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Nebraska Our Towns...6 Volumes A Second Century Publication. Jane Graff, Project Coordinator of Seward, NE 68434. Taylor Publishing Co. Dallas, TX. 1991.

Nebraska Place Names. Gives the origin of the town name and ethnic culture. Lilian L. Fitzpatrick. 1960. University of Nebraska Press.

North American Indian Sign Language. Karen Liptak. Scholastic, Inc. 1990. ISBN 0-590-50829-6.

Nya Nuki. Ken Thomasa.



The Orphan Train Adventures. Joan Lowery Nixon. Bantam Books. (A Family Apart is one book of the series.)

The Orphan Train Quartet. Joan Lowery Nixon. (A Place to Belong, A Family Apart, Caught in the Act, In The Face of Danger are books of the series.)

The Overland Migrations. Produced by the Division of Publications, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior; Washington, DC. Handbook 105.

The Pawnee Indians. George E. Hyde. University of Oklahoma Press. 1974. ISBN 0-8061-2094-0.

The Pioneers. Marie and Douglas Gorsline; Randon House; 1978; ISBN 0-394-83904-8.

The Platte River: An Atlas of the Big Bend Region. Published by the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Kearney, NE. 1993.

Red Dog. Bill Wallace. Archway paperback.

These Were the Sioux. Mari Sandoz. University of Nebraska Press. 1961. ISBN 0-8032-9151-5.

We Pointed Them North. Teddy Blue Abbott.

Wild Towns of Nebraska. Wayne C. Lee. Caxton Publishers. Caldwell, ID. 1988. ISBN 0-87004-325-0.

Health Tour Director's Guide; Wellness Council of America; ISBN 0-9628334-6-0; 1996; Wellness Council; Community Health Plaza, Suite 311; 7101 Newport Avenue, Omaha, NE 68152, E-Mail: welcoa@neonramp.com

The Nebraska History CD Project

Videos: Blossoms on The Prairie through Great Plains TV

Great Plains Trails Network

5000 North 7th Street
Lincoln, NE 68521

Health Observances Calendar

American School Health Association
P. O. Box 708
Kent, OH 44240
216/678-1601

OR



National Health Information Center
11426/28 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
301/770-5800/5801 (fax: 301/984-4256)

Indian Center

1100 Military Road
Lincoln, NE 68508
402/438-5231

Local Natural Resource Districts

Dr. Robert Manley

See Nebraska Humanities Council



MECC

6160 Summit Drive, North
Minneapolis, MN 55430-4003
(Oregon Trail II Program, computer simulation game)

Nebraska Brand Committee

HDQS: P. O. Box I
Alliance, NE 69301-0775
308/762-2496

Nebraska Department of Agriculture

301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509-4947
402/471-2341

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Section of Health Promotion and Education
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509-5044
402/471-2101
Get Fit for Life program and *Take the Challenge: Be More Active* manual

Nebraska Humanities Council

215 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68508
402/474-2131

Nebraska State Historical Society

1500 R Street
Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501
800/833-6747
Nebraska Trailblazer Newspaper

Four disks referred to as NebData may be purchased from the Nebraska State Historical Society. The data may also be found on the Social Science Resources HomePage (<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/SS/ss.html>). Use the Excite search tool.

Nebraska Tourism Office

700 South 16th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
402/471-3796 (800/228-4307)

Stewards of the Platte

308/382-5221



Stuhr Museum

Dale Clark, Director of Educational Programs
Grand Island, NE

United States Department of Interior

University of Nebraska-Cooperative Extension

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
211 Agricultural Hall
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