

History Works Lesson Plan: Colonel Torrey and Fruitville Farms

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, targeted at fourth graders, students use primary source materials dealing with Howell County history to enhance their understanding of how communities may develop, in particular the planned community of Fruitville. In addition they will use these artifacts to see the economic opportunities available to rural residents of southern Missouri in the early 1900s. All artifacts are available online at:

<http://watersheds.org/history/historyworks/fruitville>

Objectives

After this lesson the students will be able to:

- List the basic needs of a community
- Recognize persuasive writing and identify details in it
- Compose an expository paragraph using the text of a brochure to explain whether or not he/she would have moved to Fruitville
- Discuss the economic opportunities available to Fruitville residents

GLEs Addressed

Social Studies

Geographical Study

- Describe human characteristics of a place (such as population composition, architecture, kinds of economic and recreational activities, transportation and communication networks, etc.)

- Describe how people are affected by, depend on, adapt to and change their environments
- Compare regions (e.g., explain how life in a city region is different from life in a rural region)
- Use geography to interpret the past (e.g., why rivers have played an important role in human transportation) and predict future consequences (e.g., what will likely happen if the population of a city increases considerably)

Missouri, United States, and World History

- Describe the changes in Missouri since the Civil War in education, transportation, and communication

Economic Concepts

- Interpret past, explain present and predict future consequences of economic decisions
- Explain how decisions of households, businesses and governments affect one another

Communication Arts

Reading

- Apply post-reading skills to comprehend text
- Identify and explain connections between text ideas
- Use details from text to draw conclusions

Writing

- Write expository paragraphs with a main idea, three or more supporting details, a concluding sentence

Information Literacy

- Identify relevant information and record main ideas and important details in own words
- Identify and explain intended messages conveyed through oral and visual media

Teacher Background

Colonel Jay Torrey is a fascinating figure in Missouri and United States history. Many of the primary sources for this lesson came from his personal scrapbook, which was generously shared by local West Plains historian Dorothea Reavis. One secondary and one primary source are provided as background information for the teacher. The secondary source is the summary of the scrapbook, which is on microfilm at the University of Missouri, Rolla. The primary source for background information is the article on his death in the December 6, 1920 issue of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. It is important to realize that his planned community of Fruitville never really “took off.” He did sell some lots, but his planned community never actually thrived.

Student Materials

View online: <http://watersheds.org/history/historyworks/fruitville>

Map of Fruitville

Map of Torreytown

Warranty deed for farms/town lots

Postcard to show interest in receiving brochure

Fruitville brochure (typed text provided)

Cattle auction advertising card

“Mammoth Jack” donkey advertisement

Newspaper clipping on goats sheared at Fruitville

Paper summarizing peach harvest in the area

Obituary of Colonel Torrey from the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*

An excerpt from *The Life of Colonel Jay Lynn Torrey*

Instructional Procedures

1. Brainstorm with class: What does a community need?

Be sure these are included:

- jobs-businesses
- transportation, roads
- government
- homes
- infrastructure—water, electric, sewer
- communication network
- recreation

2. Share background on Col. Torrey, Fruitville and Torreytown. His planned community was based on the European model where the people would live in a planned town and have small farms outside of the town. Share and discuss the two maps and the warranty deed with the students.

3. Show the postcard that was sent in order to receive the brochure. Discuss what impression you got of Fruitville from the postcard. Have available copies of the brochure for each student. Read and discuss the brochure with the class. (Probably will need to be read aloud and discussed in sections.) Talk about the purpose of this type of writing. Divide the class into groups and have them list the advantages Col. Torrey and the brochure say Fruitville provides. Compile a master class list when the groups finish.

4. Talk about the kinds of things the farmers would have raised on their farms at Fruitville. Display the “Fruitville Notes” clipping of goats sheared, the cattle auction advertising card, the paper on peaches, and the “Mammoth Jack” advertisement (*note: the Mammoth Jack ad is for stud service, you might want to be sure your students understand this. It’s also a good time to discuss the*

Missouri mule since this is most likely what most breeders were wanting). These are all things that were being raised in the Ozarks during this time. It's also noteworthy that most of these were actually owned by Col. Torrey, not the Fruitville farmers.

Assessment

Students will be given a writing prompt that asks them to refer to the Fruitville brochure. A scoring guide is provided.

Writing Prompt:

Colonel Torrey had big plans for Fruitville where people would live in town and raise crops or livestock on nearby small farms. Pretend you are living in St. Louis in 1911 and have received one of Col. Torrey's Fruitville brochures. Discuss three things that were written in his brochure to try to convince people to buy a farm in Fruitville. Then explain if you are convinced that you should buy a farm at Fruitville. Be sure you discuss why you would or would not buy a farm there.

Scoring Guide

____ (10) Topic sentence

____ (15) Reason in brochure to move to Fruitville

____ (15) Reason in brochure to move to Fruitville

____ (15) Reason in brochure to move to Fruitville

____ (5) Whether or not you would move to Fruitville

____ (20) Why you would or would not move to Fruitville

____ (10) Concluding sentence

_____ (10) Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, usage, complete sentences

Extension

Cities today also try to persuade people that there are advantages to living in their community. Most cities have a chamber of commerce whose job it is to attract people to that city. Have students compare and contrast Col. Torrey's brochure with the information on West Plains at:

<http://www.wpchamber.com/about.html>

The same information is also available in booklet form at the Chamber office. This can be done as a class or in groups using a Venn diagram. Students may develop their own brochure with the purpose of attracting people to their city.

Historical research and lesson plan development by Kathy Barr, elementary teacher in West Plains, Missouri. We are grateful to Howell County historian and archivist Dortha Reavis for her help and for trusting us with the primary source materials about Colonel Torrey and Fruitville Farm.

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