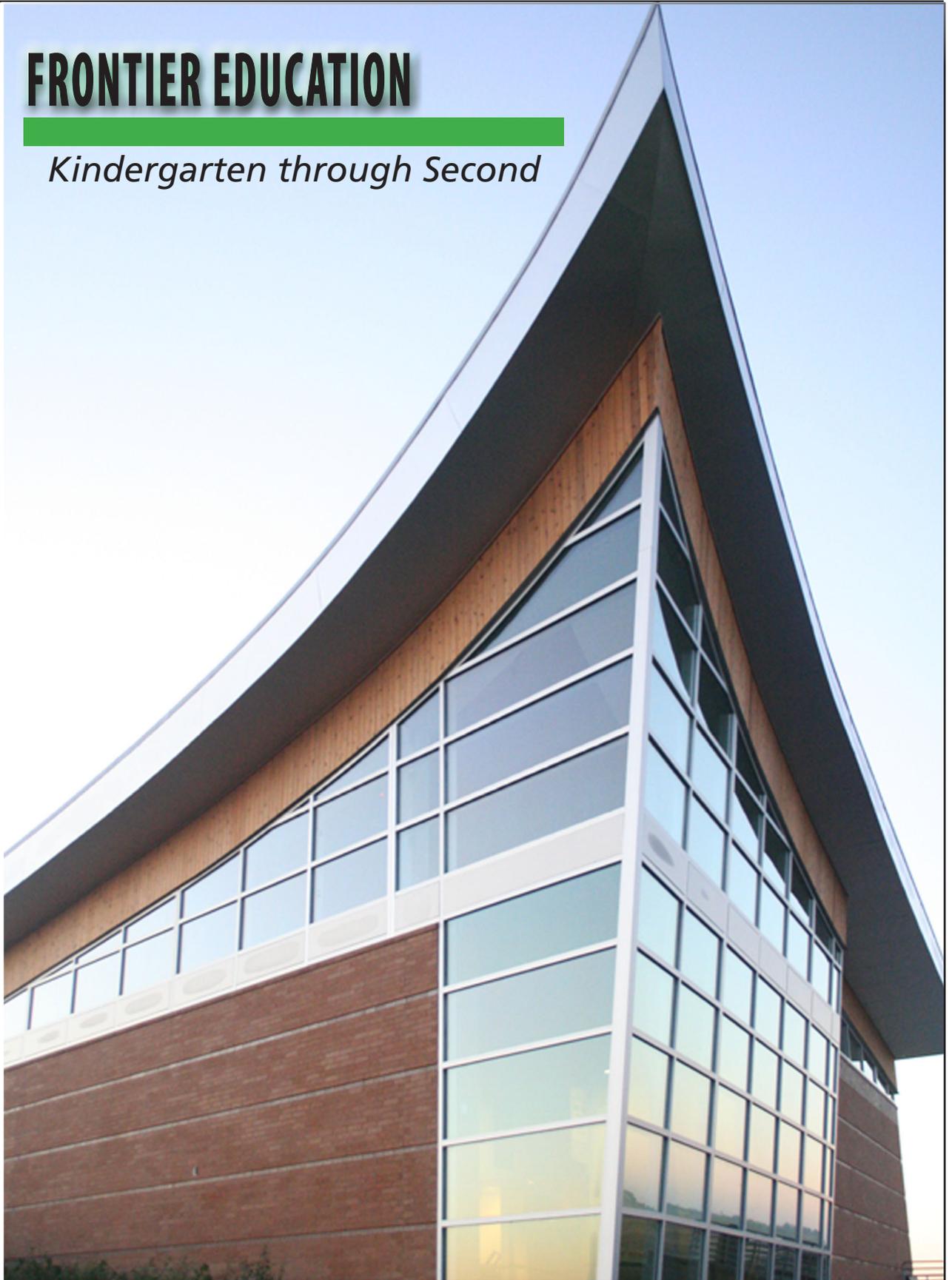


Free Land was the Cry!

FRONTIER EDUCATION

Kindergarten through Second



Homestead

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Homestead National Monument
of America, Nebraska



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Some of the ideas in this lesson may have been adapted from earlier, unacknowledged sources without our knowledge. If the reader believes this to be the case, please let us know, and appropriate corrections will be made. Thank you.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



The Freeman School stands as a reminder of the role schoolhouses played on the prairie frontier. Officially known as School District 21, the Freeman School was a center for the education of children from 1872 until 1967. At that time, it was

one of the oldest continuously operating schools in Nebraska. During its long history, the school served as a meeting place for the First Trinity Lutheran Church, a polling place for Blakely Township, and a gathering place for many organizations and clubs.

Homesteaders placed a high value on public education. Simple one-room schoolhouses were often built before their permanent homes.

Unlike many of the more typical wood or sod-walled schools found west of the Missouri River, the Freeman School was constructed of locally-baked brick. According to school records, Thomas Freeman was paid \$100.15 “on account of brick.” Furnishings were usually handmade, but the Freeman School was furnished with desks shipped from Indiana.

It seemed, as I recall it, a lonely little house of scholarship...But that humble little school had a dignity of a fixed and far off purpose...It was the outpost of civilization. It was the advance guard of the pioneer, driving the wilderness farther into the west. It was life preparing wistfully for the future.

James Rooney in 'Journey from Ignorant Ridge,' 1976

Teachers were young, often younger than their oldest students. Salaries were meager and many teachers collected a large portion of their wages in room and board. It was not uncommon for a teacher to rotate from one prairie community to another to be housed and fed.

Books were precious. Many students had to supply their own texts. Family Bibles were often used. Different editions and often different titles added to the teacher's woes. When more money was available, McGuffey readers reduced this problem. In 1881, the Freeman School provided textbooks for its students, ten years before schools were required to by the Nebraska legislature.

The schoolhouse was often the focal point for a young community. Many homesteaders saw their children baptized in the schoolhouse, heard friends eulogized there, and shared a box supper with their neighbors at the Saturday night social.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

- Students will experience life in an 1880's one room school.
- Students will compare today's schools with those in the 1880's.
- Students will pack an 1880's lunch.
- Students will learn about school yard games from the 1880's.

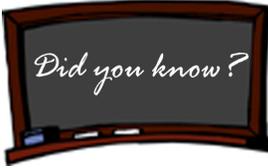
NATIONAL STANDARDS

NL-ENG.K-12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE

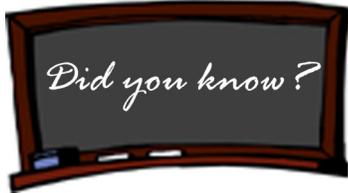
Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

NL-ENG.K-12.2 UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

SPECIAL ICONS	 Homestead Handout	<i>Enrichment Activities</i>	 Math	 Did you know?	 Music	 Language Arts
	Indicates a reproducible handout is included	Indicates advanced lessons	Indicates an additional math lesson	Indicates a little known fact about the subject	Indicates an additional music or art activity	Indicates an additional language arts lesson

Pre-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)



Congress passed the Land Ordinance of 1785 to establish a uniform system for surveying the western lands of the republic. The land was divided into ranges and townships, like a checkerboard. Each six-square mile township had 36 sections. Each section contained 640 acres and was one-mile square. When homesteaders filed a claim, they filed for 160 acres or a quarter of a section in a township. The income from section 16 was reserved for public schools. As a class find out what township your school is located in.

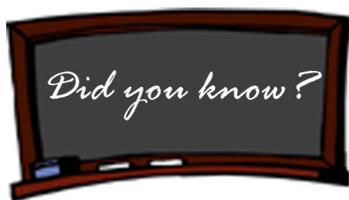
FREEMAN SCHOOL



Activity

Show the students the pictures of the Freeman School, both inside and out. They are included at the end of this unit.

Fill in the Venn diagram to compare a prairie school to your school. Write facts about each in the appropriate place. List features common to both where the circles overlap.



What Else Did Girls Learn?

If you were a girl you would learn to make soap and candles and how to make clothes for the whole family. You would also learn how to cook on a cookstove. You would learn to plant and grow food in a garden. You would make bread and butter, and learn to cook meals.

FREEMAN SCHOOL

Pre-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)



A Different
Time...
A Different
Place...
What If You Were
There?

In pioneer times, there were no electric lights...no refrigerators...no TVs or radios...no computers...no cars...no supermarkets.

What if you lived then? How would your family get around? Where would you get your food and how would you keep it fresh? What would you do for fun? Would you go to school?

The answers to these and many more can be found in *...If You Were a Pioneer on the Prairie* by Anne Kamma with illustrations by James Watling.

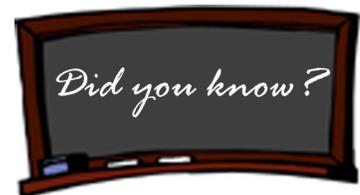


Venn Diagram

Name _____

What Else Did Boys Learn?

If you were a boy you would have to learn how to do the farm work. You would learn how to plow. You would learn how to drive the oxen and horses. A boy would have to learn how to work the machinery used to cut the wheat and the hay. You would also learn how to build houses and barns, and to repair tools.



RANGER-LED EXPERIENCE



Welcome to the Freeman School

As students enter the Freeman School, they will each be given a laminated sign with a name (taken from the 1886 Freeman School roster) and an age on it. They will be asked to sit at a desk.

Welcome to Freeman School. We will begin today much like children 100 years ago did with Morning Exercises. We would have started with a song. So join me as we begin the day at Freeman School.

An opening song is sung. It begins “We meet again ‘mid festive joys...”

Now we will have our first recitation. Recitation was used a great deal in these one room school houses. Early textbooks even had examples of how to recite. Please join me as we recite this selection by Longfellow.

The poem “Roll Call” is recited. It begins “Corporal Green!” the orderly cried...”

How many of you could tell me all the presidents in order? Well, a student 100 years ago probably could because they would have recited this next poem each morning. Please join me.

RANGER-LED EXPERIENCE

The poem “The Presidents” is recited. It begins “George Washington first to the White House came,”

Next would have been a poem about America, another recitation about the value of hard work, and a song called “The Song of the Bee.” Then morning exercises would have ended with individual recitations by selected students.

As you can see, memorizing and reciting were essential in morning exercises. But reciting did not stop with morning exercises. Sometimes parents were invited on Friday afternoon to hear the students. These were often referred to as “speaking a piece.” Students could read an essay they had written or recite something they had memorized from a book. These were referred to as “readings.”

Students were encouraged to “get their verses by heart first and their meaning later.” Today schools stress the reverse. The student needs to understand it first and then memorize it.

And sometimes the teachers were not happy with the student’s selections. For example, “Had a little owl, stuck it in the wall, and that’s all.”

Or this one...

*“Had a little wooden gun
Shot a rabbit on the run,
Skinned him on the Sabbath day,
Oh what will my teacher say?”*

To celebrate the end of the year an event called an “exhibition” was often held. These would, of course, include recitations and might also include debates. One of the topics a school debated was “Resolved that Bachelors Should Support Old Maids.”

To close I would like to offer a challenge. How many of you can say the alphabet? Now keep your hand up if you can also say the alphabet backwards as quickly as you can say it forward?

A hundred years ago all of you would have been able to keep your hand up.

Let’s close by reciting it backwards.

Thank you for joining me as we turned back the clock and began the day at Freeman School.

Depending on time a spelling bee could be conducted or students could try some playground games.

Source: Lessons from The Michigan Moderator, 1884-85



Homestead National Monument of America is proud to be a pioneer in distance learning technology.

Contact the Education Coordinator at (402) 223-3514 to schedule your virtual field trip on Frontier Education.

Post-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)



The Freeman School also served as a church for seven years. On Sundays from 1872 to 1879 church hymns reverberated from the four walls. First Trinity Lutheran Church, now located three miles west of Homestead National Monument of America, traces the early history of its congregation back to the 1860's. According to the early church history, occasional services were conducted in the Freeman School by visiting pastors between 1872 and 1875. In August 1875, a permanent pastor, C.H. Lentzsch, was installed in the Freeman School. He conducted regular services in the brick school until the first church building was constructed in 1879.

LET'S HAVE A PICNIC



Many one-room schools ended the school year with a school picnic. This picture was taken at Freeman School in 1911. The students are around a Maypole. Have students bring a box lunch with simple food pioneer children might have brought in their lunches, such as bread and butter sandwiches and apples. Follow the lunch with games.

Suggestions for Pioneer Lunches

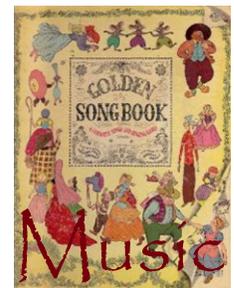
- Corn muffins, cold pancakes, homemade bread
- Cheese
- Jelly or jam sandwiches
- Meat sandwiches
- Dried meat, jerky
- Hard boiled egg
- Fresh fruits
- Fresh vegetables
- Cookies
- Wrap lunch items in a box or pail

Other Activities

Sing songs such as 'School Days' or songs from the Golden Songbook.

Other songs from this period are "She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain," "Annie Laurie," "Whistle, Mary Whistle," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and "Polly Wolly Doodle."

See lyrics to some songs at the end of this unit.



LET'S HAVE A PICNIC

Suggestions for Pioneer Games

Dare Base

Any number of children may play this game, but the two teams must have the same number of players. Two bases are made about 30 yards apart. The teams are called A and B. Members of team A see how close they can get to the base of team B without getting tagged. This is continued by each team alternately with the opposite team. Any person tagged must go to the opposite base as a penalty. The object of each team is to see how many members or players they can get for their base. The team capturing the largest number of players at the end of a given time wins.

Blindman's Bluff

A blindfolded player is led into the center of the circle. As the player turns around three or four times, the people in the circle chant:

“How many horses has your father got?”

“Three.”

“What colors are they?”

“Black, blue and gray.”

“Turn about, and turn about, and catch whom you can.”

The blindfolded player then tries to capture someone and guess their name. If the player does not guess the right name, they must try again with a new person. When successful the person captured and named correctly, must in turn be blindfolded.

Cat and Rat

Two players are selected, one as the Cat and one as the Rat. The other players stand in a circle holding hands, with arms outstretched and held high. The Cat and the Rat start on opposite sides of the circle. The following exchange precedes the game:

Cat: I am the Cat

Rat: I am the Rat

Cat: I will catch you

Rat: You can't

Rat: Ready

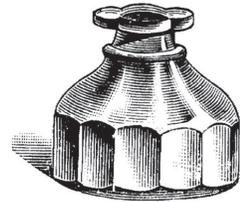
The chase begins. The Rat runs in and out of the circle of players, underneath their arms. The Cat must follow the exact course of the Rat or he is “crowned” and another Cat is chosen. If the Rat is caught, the Cat becomes the Rat and chooses another Cat.

Follow the Leader

One player is the leader and runs at the head of the line. He runs in and out, hopping and clapping his hands. Any player who fails to follow the leader and do as he does must drop out of the game. The game continues until all have been eliminated.

Post-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)

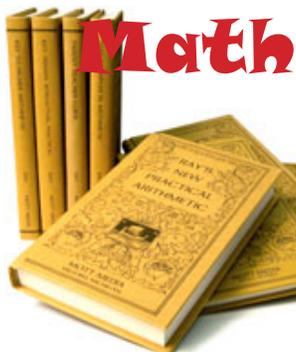
Enrichment Activities



Even though, early home-steaders were busy “proving up,” they still found time to raise money for education.

William Scheve, land-owner and grandson of Steve Scheve that donated the land Freeman School stands on, said in a 1973 interview, “The school teacher would have box socials at night to raise money for the school. There would be one or two of those a year. I forget what these proceeds would go for, but you would buy these boxes that the girls would fix. You would bid on them and paid \$6 to \$7. That was high, usually \$1 to \$1.50. Everybody looked forward to the box socials.”

Do you think this idea would work today? What would you pack if you had to make a lunch for a box social?



Solve problems on slates. (May use construction paper, chalk and facial tissue if slates are unavailable.)

Other Activities

CHARACTER EDUCATION

RESPONSIBILITY

Students who are responsible are doing their part and taking care of themselves. They no longer rely on others to do things for them or give things to them. They are able to accept blame without making excuses. They are growing up.

5 Minute Focus

In a one room schoolhouse all the children helped to take care of the room.

- What do you do to help in your classroom?
- How do you help to keep it neat and clean?

Draw yourself helping in your classroom.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A One-Room School by Bobbie Kalman; Crabtree Publishing Company, 1994.

Games From Long Ago by Bobbie Kalman; Crabtree Publishing Company, 1994.

If You Were a Pioneer on the Prairie by Anne Kamma with Illustrations by James Watling, Scholastic Inc., 2003

Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder; HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1935

The Nebraska Adventure by Jean A. Lukesh; Gibbs Smith; 2004

She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain

Written By: Unknown,
Copyright Unknown

She'll be coming round the mountain
When she comes
(Toot, toot!)

She'll be coming round the mountain
When she comes
(Toot, toot!)

She'll be coming round the mountain,
She'll be coming round the mountain,
She'll be coming round the mountain
When she comes
(Toot, toot!)

She'll be driving six white horses
When she comes
(Whoa back!)

She'll be driving six white horses
When she comes
(Whoa back!)

She'll be driving six white horses,
She'll be driving six white horses,
She'll be driving six white horses
When she comes
(Whoa back! Toot, toot!)

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her
When she comes
(Hi babe!)

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her
When she comes
(Hi babe!)

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her,
We'll all go out to meet her,

We'll all go out to meet her
When she comes
(Hi babe!

Whoa back! Toot, toot!)

She'll be wearing red pajamas
When she comes
(Scratch, scratch)

She'll be wearing red pajamas
When she comes
(Scratch, scratch)

She'll be wearing red pajamas,
She'll be wearing red pajamas,
She'll be wearing red pajamas
When she comes
(Scratch, scratch, Hi babe!
Whoa back! Toot, toot!)

She will have to sleep with Grandma
When she comes
(She snores!)

She will have to sleep with Grandma
When she comes
(She snores!)

She will have to sleep with Grandma,
She'll have to sleep with Grandma,
She will have to sleep with Grandma
When she comes
(She snores!

Scratch, scratch, Hi babe!
Whoa back! Toot, toot!)

Polly Wolly Doodle

Southern

Written By: Unknown

Copyright Unknown

Oh, I went down South
For to see my Sal
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
My Sal, she is
A spunky gal
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Oh, my Sal, she is
A maiden fair
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
With curly eyes
And laughing hair
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Behind the barn,
Down on my knees
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
I thought I heard
A chicken sneeze
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

He sneezed so hard
With the whooping cough
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
He sneezed his head
And the tail right off
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Oh, a grasshopper sittin'
On a railroad track
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
A-pickin' his teeth
With a carpet tack
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Oh, I went to bed
But it wasn't any use
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
My feet stuck out
Like a chicken roost
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Venn Diagram

Name _____

