

Be a River Pioneer!

Objective:

Students will role-play to review the development of Illinois River towns economically, politically, and socially.

Grades: 6-10

Time Required: several class periods (one-to-three for reading of the Web site (can be explored using another lesson plan unit); one-to-two periods or homework assignment to complete the ten steps below (presented visually, textually or orally by the individual or group.)



Procedure:

You are a member of a young family living in the 1830s who decides to move west to the Illinois Territory from an eastern state or from another country. You will live there for fifty years.

Describe yourself and each of your family members (origin, ages, genders, backgrounds, philosophy, attitudes, skills, etc.)

- 1) You decide to go down the Ohio River, up the Mississippi to the Illinois and up the Illinois to the central part of the river. Access is by river transport.
- 2) Choose a town in which to settle. (Liverpool, Havana, Beardstown, Meredosia, Bath, Browning. Describe the town as you found it. State your reasons for choosing it.
- 3) Select a means of supporting yourself (subsistence, trade, skill, employment) and tell how you will proceed with your work (jobs).
- 4) Research and select a place to live (build a cabin, homestead some land, live on the river, etc.)
- 5) Educate your children
- 6) Involve all family members in supporting the family economically
- 7) Participate in town development, government, functions, etc.
- 8) List any calamities, setbacks, illnesses, losses, windfalls, successes you have over the years.
- 9) Describe your town after 25 years (1860s) and after 50 years (1910s). How did the town grow? What did you contribute to the growth and prosperity of the town?
- 10) What do you think the future holds for your town? Why?



Meredosia, 1865. from the Meredosia Bicentennial Book

Online Resources:

<http://www.museum.state.il.us/RiverWeb/harvesting/index.html>

Illinois State Museum's *Harvesting the River Web* Exhibit

Presentation and Assessment:

Presentation could be in one of several possible formats: a written report describing the settlement through the ten steps; a visual presentation using images, artifacts, labels, photographs; an oral report based on written notes; an oral costumed presentation in character.

Assessment could be a rubric developed by the teacher based on the elements focused on in the unit of study; assessment could be the student's or group's answers to questions posed by the audience members.

Illinois State Board of Education Goals Addressed:**Social Science:****Geography:**

Late Elementary: 17.A.2b: Use maps and other geographic representations and instruments to gather information about people, places and environments.

17.B.2b: Explain how physical and living components interact in a variety of ecosystems including desert, prairie, flood plain, forest, and tundra.

Early High School: 17.A.4a: Use mental maps of physical features to answer complex geographic questions (e.g., how physical features have deterred or enabled migration).

Economics:

Late Elementary: 15.D.2b: Describe the relationships among specialization, division of labor, productivity of workers and interdependence among producers and consumers.

History:

Late Elementary: 16.A.2c: Ask questions and seek answers by collecting and analyzing data from historic documents, images and other literary and non-literary sources.

Middle School: 16.A.3b: Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.

Social systems:

Late Elementary: 18.B.2a: Describe interactions of individuals, groups and institutions in situations drawn from the local community (e.g., local response to state and national reforms).

Middle School: 18.B.3a: Analyze how individuals and groups interact with and within institutions (e.g., educational, military).

Goals Addressed by Method of Presentation:

Fine Arts: Drama:

Late Elementary: 26.B.2b Drama: Demonstrate actions, characters, narrative skills, collaboration, environments, simple staging and sequence of events and situations in solo and ensemble dramas.

Middle School: 26.B.3b Drama: Demonstrate storytelling, improvising and memorizing scripted material supported by simple aural and visual effects and personal background knowledge needed to create and perform in drama/theatre.

Early High School: 26.B.4b Drama: Create and perform an ensemble drama or theatre scene using research, collaboration, characterization and staging in combination with aural and visual technologies (e.g., video, lights, sets, costumes, make-up, sound, props).

Language Arts:

C. Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

Speaking:

B. Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.