

Westward You Go: An Overland Adventure

Written by Barsinia Rogers

Overland Diary of the Samuel Curtus Rogers Family from Illinois to Arizona in 1867: First School Master of Prescott Arizona

Grade Levels: Upper Elementary (4 - 6)

Historical Era: Westward Expansion Era 1867

Content Areas: English Language Arts, US History, Geography, Art

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Summary and Objective

The students will read Barsinia's diary about their trip from Illinois to Prescott, Arizona. Students will understand that we can learn a great deal about past happenings through the writings created by the people living during these events. Students will learn about the difficulties experienced by individuals living in a pre technology era. Through the use of personal writings, history and individuals transcend abstractions providing concrete learning and a deeper understanding and appreciation.

Lesson Plan

Step 1. The students will read the 1867 transcribed diary of Barsinia Rogers, answer a set of questions about the diary, and develop questions they could have asked Barsinia. Here are some possible questions: When was the diary written? Where was she and why was she there? What is the relationship of the writer to the rest of the party? To whom was Barsinia writing and why; what was her job? What was the writer's mood and how does she feel about the journey? What kind of information about the overland journey does she give in this diary? Why do you think the soldiers were disguised? Why were the Apaches hostile? Write two questions you might ask Barsinia if given a chance.

Step 2. The students will discuss their thoughts about the trip and how Barsinia and her family felt about the journey.

Step 3. The students will *Compare and Contrast*: How was travel different

back then from today?

Step 4. Trace Barsinia's journey on a map from Illinois to Prescott Arizona marking the diary entries with push pins. Post entry next to the site. An enlarged map can be drawn to accommodate illustrations.

Post Activity

Step 5. The students will review the key issues of Westward Expansion, daily life of the pioneer on the trail and the development of Arizona through the influx of people. The students will be given some background information about overland diaries. The students can view diary covers and diary transcriptions found on web sites. One source is: Brigham Young University Digital Library; Trails of Hope, Overland Diaries and Letters, 1846-1869 <http://overlandtrails.lib.byu.edu/>

Step 6. The students will design a book cover and write their own diary entries with optional illustrations about an adventure or day on the trail utilizing what they have learned about traveling to the Arizona territory in the 1800's and diary sources.

- Diary entries with illustrations may have the future option of web posting on The Sharlot Hall Museum Educational Tour link.
- Additional Activities: Students write and perform a play about a diary adventure or dress up and read their entries. Diaries or a play can be presented to the class or lower elementary grades