

IOWA PAST TO PRESENT TEACHERS GUIDE
Revised 3rd Edition

Chapter 8: Settlers from Many Lands

CONTENT OBJECTIVES

Following the completion of the readings and activities for this chapter, students will have acquired the following understandings:

- a. All Iowans have ancestors who immigrated to Iowa from other parts of the United States or the world (although American Indians came a few thousand years before the rest.)
- b. People immigrated to Iowa for many reasons, including “push-pull factors” and events related to World War I.
- c. Numerous ethnic settlements with unique customs and traditions were started in Iowa. Several festivals featuring the cultural traditions of these ethnic groups are held annually across the state.
- d. Today Iowa continues to be a home for immigrants from all over the world, including newcomers from Bosnia, the Sudan, and additional immigrants from Mexico.

VOCABULARY TO KNOW

census	literacy
conscription	push-pull factors
discrimination	refugees
ethnic	rosemaing
Europe	settlement
freedom	Turner Society
generation	utopia
immigrant	

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Interview recent immigrants to your community. Ask them to share how they chose Iowa as their home.
2. Using the yellow pages of the local phone book, have students identify businesses and institutions which reflect a particular ethnic group and make contributions to the community.
3. Have students gather information on the various ethnic festivals held throughout the state. Using a classroom map, mark the location of each festival and display significant background information, such as ethnic group origin, date, etc. For information contact the Iowa Department of Economic Development.

Activity 8-1: DESCRIBING IOWA TO A FRIEND

Skills. Summarizing and personalizing historical information

Materials. Writing paper, Letter of Sarah and John Kenyon

Procedure

1. Introduce the lesson by reading the Kenyon letter to students. Sarah Kenyon came to Iowa with her husband John, traveling from Rhode Island in 1856. She wrote many such letters back to her relatives in the East to let them know what it was like to live in pioneer Iowa.

2. Distribute writing paper to students. Ask them to write letters back home as if they were recent immigrants to Iowa in 1856. Whether they select an eastern state or a European country as home, students should describe their lives on the frontier from the viewpoint of a pioneer settler.

3. Conclude the lesson by having students share their letters with the class. Letters might be illustrated with drawings or maps.

**Letter of Sarah and John Kenyon
(Reproduced in its original form)**

Plum Creek
Aug 29 (1856)

(Sarah Kenyon)

...Our goods have all arrived. The last that were sent came on the same time as our others. The stove hearth was broken into and Housing the slide pretty well smashed. We can have the hearth mended I think but the slide is past pancakes. everything else came safe and sound....

Our folks went after plums yesterday and I went a week ago. we travel in ox teams here over the prairies. It was the first time I had been in the woods since we came here. it was really refreshing to get in the shade and hear the birds sing. When I buy my farm I shall be near my timber....

Mr Parsons sold his farm a week ago for 27 hundred part prairie and part timber joining and is going farther west about two hundred miles. his wife feels very bad about it. I dont blame her. I have always looked at their place and thought it the prettiest place about here. there house stands near to the grove of timber. but any of the Westers are ready to sell anytime to make money. Mr Parsons paid six hundred for his two years ago so he thinks he will sell and go and make another good farm and sell again. I warrant all he has done to this one was to break and fence 20 or 30 acres. there was an old log hut on it that they have lived in since he came here without a window and so cold in Winter they have to go to bed to keep from freesing. that is what one of his boys told here. isnt it a shame a man worth between three and four thousand to live so but its the way of the world here.

We get along and do without things here that would be impossible in the East. I should dread for our neighbors to come and see us if they were not going to stay and settle. if so well and good for they would soon see the way of Western life...

Wednesday forenoon I must try to steal a few minutes to write so as to get my letter finished to send to the office the first time Mail any one goes that way. it is not here as it was to Ashaway. you have to write and wait an opportunity to get it to the office. five miles over those prairies is quite a piece.

Tomorrow there will be ten dozen men here to thresh wheat so I shall get but previous little time to write then. Our freight bill was enormous on our goods but I dont see what we could have spared very well. we get along with what we brought. all that I have bought is half dozen cups & saucers. we have to snub it but that is what I knew we should have to do but as long as we have enough to eat I shall feel pretty well satisfied. We dont have nay dainties but we shall live just as long and perhaps be the healthier.

Molasses is eighty five cts per gallon sugar you can get 6, 8 and 9 pounds for a dollar. I did want to do up some plums but I cannot this year. great ones most as big as peaches.

green tea such as we get there for forty cts is one dollar. We shall have to go on credit for a year then if John has his health I hope we can do pretty well. He has got his cow most paid for. I feel very thankful for that and (he) has bought two more heifers. I dont know how he will manage to pay for them but if he cant why he must sell them. it is not like buying Livestock clothing or any such thing for they will sell and keep gaining too. I really want to keep them through the winter if possible as he has got his hay cut and they would sell then for a great deal more than what he gave. He bought them to a sale on three months credit last month for eighteen dollars of the same man he bought his cow of...

a mink killed (Clara s) old white hen and part of the chickens so I had to take six of the chickens into the house...Mrs. Robberts gave she and Bub a Shangai rooster and pullet. their names are Tom & Bet. I expect every night will be their last for the roost is not good for any thing and the owls minks and hawks are ready to help themselves the first opportunity. If they will keep off untill John can build a roost I will thank them very kindly...

I begin to dread the Winter. they tell such cold stories about here. they said last Winter was awful by generally the Winters are very mild so much so that the ground dont freese untill about January but last Winter their floors would ice when they mopped and the tables when they washed dishes. Mr Barnard froze his great toe one night. it happened to get out of bed when he was asleep...people as a general thing clothe the west with to much romance I take it. its not all gold that shines...

(Note from John Kenyon on same letter)

...we have dug a well since we have been here and I finished stoneing it up yesterday. I have been a thrashing this week. we had 1,00. 15 (sic. 115) bushels wheat. they use thrashing machines here. it requires 8 horses and ten men to tend them and will thrash from 3 to 5 hundred bus (bushels) a day. they put me in mind of a cotton hopper but make a heap more noise and its a right smart machine. that is a hoosier expression out here. you can use it for a by word...

Activity 8-2: WHY DID PEOPLE LEAVE?

Skills. Interpreting primary source material

Materials. Immigrants' letters in text

Procedure

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to identify reasons early immigrants came to Iowa. These might include negative factors in their homeland as well as positive benefits of moving to Iowa.
2. Assign different readings to six student volunteers. After the students have read each paragraph aloud, discuss the reasons why settlers came to Iowa.
3. Conclude the lesson by creating a chart that compares 19th-century immigration with that of today. What factors in the 19th century led people to leave other parts of the world to settle in Iowa? What factors today lead immigrants to move to Iowa?

Activity 8-3: PATHWAYS TO IOWA

Skills. Identifying and researching family history

Materials. Classroom map of the world, yarn, markers

Procedure

1. Introduce the lesson by reviewing with students the fact that all Iowans have ancestors who immigrated from another part of the world.
2. Encourage students to collect information on their family histories and report back to the class about where their ancestors originated. Use last names of students as well as other historical information they may collect to identify the various cultural groups from which students come.
3. Conclude the lesson by displaying a classroom map of the world. Have students identify countries from which their ancestors came, by pinning yarn on the map from Iowa to the various countries.

Activity 8-4: PUSH-PULL AT WORK

Skills. Skimming written material for specific details

Materials. Student copies of handout 8-4

Procedure

1. Begin the lesson by reviewing the push-pull concept. Have students suggest reasons immigrants left other countries to come to Iowa.
2. Distribute copies of handout 8-4. Have students use their textbooks and other print or online resource materials to identify specific groups and the reasons they came to America.
3. Conclude the lesson by sharing responses as a class.

Activity 8-5: BUXTON: AN IOWA SETTLEMENT

Skills. Reading and interpreting primary source materials

Materials. Minnie London's recollections of Buxton (in text), classroom wall map of Iowa

Procedure

1. Introduce the lesson by reviewing the textbook material on Buxton.
2. Introduce reading by providing students with the following background information about Minnie London:

Mrs. Minnie London was for many years a schoolteacher in Buxton. She vividly recalled her life in Buxton and wrote her recollection titled "As I Remember" many years after leaving the community. Her daughter, Vaeletta Fields, lived for many years in Waterloo. Despite her degree from the University of Iowa, Mrs. Fields was unable to get a good job because she was African American. Mrs. London's account carefully describes the unusual setting which existed in Buxton for African American workers in the early twentieth century.

3. Read the selection together.
4. Next have students attempt to locate Buxton on the classroom map of Iowa. (Buxton no longer exists. It was located just south of Oskaloosa.)
5. Discuss the following questions:
 - a. From what states and countries did people come to live and work in the mines near Buxton?
 - b. Besides coal-mining-related occupations, what other jobs were held by residents of Buxton?
 - c. How was the community of Buxton a very favorable place for African American people to live?
 - d. For what reasons did residents of Buxton leave?

PRIMARY MATERIAL: "As I Remember:" An Account of Buxton by Minnie B. London (unabridged)

[Note: Mrs. London's memoir is cut considerably in the text.]

In the early spring of 1891 I went as a bride to what was once old Muchakinock, an Indian name that was derived from a nearby creek meaning, I was told, "hard to cross." It was a mining camp five or six miles from Oskaloosa, the county seat.

The camp, as it was called, had formerly been inhabited by white miners. When they went on a strike the Chicago and Northwestern Coal Company, who owned the mines, brought in colored miners and their families from Stauton, Charlottesville, and other towns Virginia. These colored men knew nothing of mining but were taught coal-mining by men hired by the Company. Besides the colored people there were also a goodly number of Swedes.

A branch of C. and N. W. Railroad ran west through the town, which was often used as a street especially in muddy weather .

The coal company not only owned the mines but owned and operated a General Merchandise store, which had a system known as Order Days running, say, from the first to the fifth of the month according to the number of people and the division of the town. On these days the miners or their wives would order groceries, etc., supposedly to last a month or until the next Order Day. To the clerks it meant work and more work, for many times they would have to work an night putting up orders with no extra pay. To the women it was like a great social gathering where they could get together and visit or learn the latest news of the town, perhaps the death of a miner caused by falling slate or the birth of twins having been brought into the world by Old Lady Ross, the midwife of the town, who in her black and white apron was usually kept busy.

The new camp was named Buxton, after the Superintendent of the Mines, a name that was destined for more than a score of years to take its place among other towns of the state. It carried with it an the traditions of the old town, yet it attracted many people from various towns and cities of Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri, in fact from everywhere.

I am sure I am safe in saying that when the town, Buxton, was at its height, no other town in Iowa could boast so many professional and business people of our own group. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, druggists, pharmacists, undertakers, postmaster, Justice of the Peace, constables, clerks, members of the school board, and what have you were all there.

The following persons were prominent at some time in the camp and the positions they held: Dr. E. A. Carter now of Detroit, Michigan; Dr. C. G. Robinson of Chicago; Dr. Williams; Dr. H. H. London, and Dr. Taylor; Lawyers, Geo. W. Woodson and Jas. Spears; Druggists and Pharmacists, B. F. Cooper and Ike and Hattie Hutchinson; Undertaker, S. Billings; Postmaster, Ed Mills; Dentist, L. R. Willis; Music teachers, Cora Thomas, Josie Meadows, Mollie Tibbs, Mrs. Will Lee, and Mrs. Dumond (wife of the Congregational Minister); Justice of the Peace, E. A. London; Constable, Tom Romans.

James Roberts manufactured Cuban Hand Made Havana Cigars and did a wholesale and retail business.

The Granberry Bros., manufacturers of tailor made clothes satisfied the most discriminating customer.

Peter Abington, the caterer, kept his wagon on the street all day long selling ice cream, pies, bread, butter, and eggs.

The Buxton Savings Bank occupied one end of the store building with Mrs. Lottie Baxter, the daughter of H. A. Armstrong, as cashier.

Among other business ventures in Buxton that stand out in my memory are: Lewis Reasby with his hamburger and hot dog stand across from the company store and in front of the Y.M.C.A. His comical manner of crying his wares would attract passers-by, who would stop and listen to him, then find themselves thrusting their hands into their pockets and saying, " A hot dog please."

Yes, Buxton had a newspaper too, namely the "Buxton Advocate." It was a weekly edited and owned by R. B. Montgomery.

The Y.M.C.A. was large three-story structure built diagonally across from the company store. It was built expressly for the colored miners, and when they seemed reluctant to take advantage of the opportunity, the Supt. indicated that he would turn it over to the white people. Our people, after reconsideration, pledged cooperation and then a very efficient secretary in the person of L. E. Johnson was engaged.

"Sharp End," I suppose, was the sudden termination of the town to the south, and located in this area was a drug store owned and operated by Ike Hutchinson, whose wife Hattie was the registered pharmacist.

Following the road a little farther west was a grocery store managed by J. W. Neely, who also was a pharmacist. By an means we must not forget H. D. (Hustler) Williams looking out for business.

Near the depot Anderson Perkins and Son operated a hotel and confectionary. They advertised good meals and first class service. Hotel rates \$1.00 and \$1.50.

The schools took the name of the streets, if we may call them streets, on which they were located or the section of town. Thus we had a Fifth Street School, an Eleventh Street School, and a Swede Town School. They were two-story buildings of four rooms each, thus employing twelve teachers.

The rooms were all well filled with pupils and often a teacher would have to instruct several grades. The grade work done in these schools compared favorably with any in the state. For instance, whenever pupils from these schools went to school in other places, I have been told by the teachers of other towns that they were always glad to get the Buxton children because of their thoroughness.

After several years the number of pupils to enter High School became greater so the School Board erected a large building east of the Fifth Street School maintaining two years of High School to begin with. They employed a Prof. Gilliam as Superintendent. After one year of occupancy it burned down just the Sunday before the beginning of the first semester of the second year. The cause of the loss was said to have been due to the construction of the building. It was never rebuilt so to other towns in the state High School pupils had to continue to go.

About 1921 many of the pioneers were destined to be moved to another coal field as the mines at Buxton were just about worked out. The new camp was called Haydock, still in Monroe County about eighteen miles distant over hills and valleys. Fewer still were willing to follow up the unstable life of a miner and so many continued to go to various cities. The camp had already been populated by many white miners and their families, mainly from Illinois, thus there were less colored people and very few business ventures.

FROM: Minnie B. London. 1940. "As I Remember." Hubert L. Olin Papers. Des Moines: State Historical Society of Iowa.