

Lesson Eight

Objectives:

- Students will interpret data from the interactive map at the Mark Twain's Mississippi web site.
- Students will analyze primary source accounts of migration into the Mississippi Valley.
- Students will use the category of gender to compare and contrast motives for and patterns of settlement into the Mississippi Valley.
- Students will make conclusions about settlement patterns based on gender by synthesizing two different types of evidence—statistical data from the map and written accounts by specific settlers.
- In the role of an official at the U.S. Department of Interior, students will write a brief report presenting their conclusions to the secretary of that department.

Materials Needed:

All of the materials are available at the Mark Twain's Mississippi Web site:

Interactive map—<http://atlas.lib.niu.edu/Website/twain/viewer.htm>

Spencer, J. W. *Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in the Mississippi Valley*. Davenport: Griggs, Watson and Day, 1872—<http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/navigate.pl?lincoln.3450>

Peck, John Mason; Babcock, Rufus, editor. *Forty Years of Pioneer Life: Memoir of John Mason Peck D. D.* Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1864—<http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/navigate.pl?lincoln.3364> (**Note: to abbreviate this longer reading, have students focus on Chapters VI-XII.**)

Coonc, Elizabeth Ann. *Reminiscences of a Pioneer Woman*. Washington Historical Quarterly, v. 8, p. 14-21, 1917—<http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/navigate.pl?lincoln.3916>

Tillson, Christina Holmes. *A Woman's Story of Pioneer Illinois*. Chicago: R. R. Donnelly and Sons, 1919—<http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/navigate.pl?lincoln.3930>

Time Required:

One-two class periods and one evening of homework are needed for students to analyze the data from the map and read through the settlers' accounts. An additional period or evening of homework will be needed for students to complete their reports.

Introduction:

One of the major themes of U.S. History is that of migration and settlement. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to use two different types of evidence to reach conclusions about settlement patterns in the Mississippi Valley. First, students will access the interactive map at the Mark Twain's Mississippi site and employ the features which provide census data

over time. Students will be looking through the prism of gender to determine if this factor influenced settlement patterns or motives for settlement. For further exploration of the gender theme of settlement, students will read accounts of pioneer life by both men and women. After checking the two forms of evidence against each other, students will apply their understanding by writing a mock report to the Secretary of the Interior presenting conclusions related to the gendered pattern of settlement and if necessary, suggesting ways to achieve greater gender balance along the Mississippi River.

Note: This lesson can be completed individually, with partners, or by creating small groups.

Assignment:

1. Introduce the assignment by asking students to imagine they are going to move from their lives as unskilled laborers on the East coast (perhaps New York City or Philadelphia) of the United States in the nineteenth century to settle in the West. Have them write down three positive expectations and three worries/concerns while anticipating their migration. Poll student responses and list these pros and cons on the board, but make sure to divide them by gender (What Women Want and What Men Want). If there are differences, please draw student attention to them and/or have them speculate how men and women might have viewed settlement into the West differently because of their genders.

2. Now tell students that they will be using primary source materials to investigate the role that gender might have played in settlement of the Mississippi Valley over four decades. Students will access the interactive map at the web address above. The lesson focuses on the period 1830-1860, though teachers may widen the time period if they wish, as the map covers the entire nineteenth century. However, settlement patterns prior to 1830 were so sparse that students may find data analysis difficult, and the maps after 1860 do not break down population data between males and females. To generate the appropriate data, have students complete the following steps:

- You will be investigating four decades (1830-1860) and recording your data on a chart. Begin by selecting the year 1830
- Click on “create gradient map”
- For category selection, alternatively choose for each year “total free whites,” “free white males,” and “free white females”
- Display the results by county (choose several to trace over time)
- Any color pattern will suffice
- Select the number of equal intervals—the number of numerical categories into which the data will be divided (Note: this number should be high enough to show subtle differences. Between 8 and 10 intervals is recommended.)
- Click on “submit to map” (it may take about 30 seconds)
- A list of the highest population totals by county will be listed on the right side of the screen

3. As students generate the appropriate maps for each decade, they should record their data and conclusions in the collection sheet provided. Students should alternately divide the “free white

males” and “free white females” figures into the “total free whites” totals for the selected counties to determine percentages of each, for purposes of comparison.

4. When students have completed their data collection from the map, explain that they will now test their findings against four separate accounts of settlement in the Mississippi Valley—two by a man and two by a woman. To facilitate the lesson, teachers may wish to divide the accounts among students, but each student should read at least one male and one female account. As they read the accounts (all of which are of manageable length, except the one by Peck, which can be abridged as suggested above), students should gather data in the collection sheet in the appropriate categories. For the longer readings, it is not necessary that students complete the entire selection.

5. When students have completed both data collection sheets, teachers may wish to have them compare their findings in small groups or lead a general class discussion. Instructors may find the questions below helpful in guiding the discussion:

- What was the balance of gender population in the Mississippi Valley?
- How did this change over time?
- What factors led people to settle in the Mississippi Valley? Which of these factors seemed most important?
- How did these factors differ from person to person? How, if at all, did these factors differ based on gender?
- How did men and women portray the west in similar and in different ways?
- What particular concerns about westward settlement were influenced by gender, if any?

6. To conclude the lesson, teachers should tell students that the Department of the Interior was established in 1849 to oversee the settlement and resource use of western lands. Have students imagine that they are writing a report to the Secretary of the Interior about the patterns of settlement of the Mississippi Valley around 1860; the purpose of the report will be provide data about the settlement of western lands but also to help establish policies for continued orderly settlement in the future. Their 1-page report should include the following:

- A summary of the data they collected from the interactive map.
- An analysis of those features that attract and concern potential settlers.
- Reasons for any differences in settlement based on gender, and how this might have changed over time.
- Suggestions for ways to attract different types of settlers (including women). This should include incentives for encouraging settlers to migrate as families, rather than simply individual males.

Alternative Technology Suggestion: If teachers have access to the appropriate technology and software, they can encourage students to submit their reports as a podcast using Audacity mp3 software (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>) or in audio-visual format using Voicethread (<http://voicethread.com/>).

Lesson Eight: Interactive Map Data Collection Sheet

Year	Population Totals	Male Percentages	Female Percentages	Conclusions
1830				
1840				
1850				
1860				

Lesson Eight: Settlers' Account Data Collection

Settler	Attractions/Motives	Concerns	Portrayal	Conclusions
Spencer (male)				
Peck (male)				
Coonc (female)				
Tillson (female)				

1. What types of motives and concerns did the settlers express in their accounts?
2. What, if any, differences did you notice based on gender?
3. How did men and women portray the Mississippi Valley in similar and different ways?