

Early American Immigration

Independent Analysis

Overview

This assignment will require you to search for and analyze primary sources in our digital library.

Before beginning make sure you've watched:

- a.) Part 1 - Introductory tour video
- b.) Part 2 - Video explaining how to use our digital library
- c.) Part 3 - Early American immigration primary source analysis video

Instructions

On the following pages you will find two passages of background information, followed by instructions that guide you through pulling primary sources from our digital library. After you find the sources, you will answer several questions about them. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper or in a word document.

To access our digital library, open a web browser and navigate to <https://dl.mospace.umsystem.edu/ums/>

You can also find the link on the right side of the Anniversary Educational Series webpage.

*It is easiest to print these instructions so you can use your web browser to access the digital library. If you don't have access to a printer, you will need to switch back and forth between two tabs in your web browser- one tab for these instructions and the other for the digital library.

Across the Continent by Frances “Fanny” Palmer

The study of early American immigration has often overlooked the lives and accomplishments of women. Researchers focusing on big picture population shifts sometimes ignore gender differences entirely. Unfortunately this limits our understanding of the immigrant experience. Women secured the right to vote in 1920. Before then, their citizenship and rights to immigrate were based largely on their relationships to men. Early immigration restrictions targeted the poor or those “likely to become public charges”. These rules disproportionately affected single women traveling without male relatives.

Frances Bond Palmer immigrated to the United States in 1844. She grew up in a wealthy English family and enjoyed a privileged education, studying music, literature and fine arts. Shortly after she married Edmund Palmer, their financial fortunes took a downturn. Frances used her artistic talents to support their growing family as a lithographer.

Lithography is a printmaking process. To learn how lithographs are made visit: <https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/curatorial-departments/drawings-and-prints/materials-and-techniques/printmaking/lithograph>

Frances and her husband began a lithography company in Leicester, England. They enjoyed initial success, but couldn't generate enough business to support themselves. They immigrated to New York City in 1844 seeking improved economic opportunities. Frances taught singing, painting, and drawing, while working as a governess, raising her two children, and running her household. She and her husband also began a lithography business called F. Palmer and Company. Frances created advertisements and reproduced architectural drawings. She made prints of flowers and designed sheet music. She also drew imagined scenes of the Mexican War and the American West. Despite the popularity of her work, she once again struggled to secure enough business and their company failed.

Frances' art caught the attention of fellow lithographer Nathaniel Currier. He invited her to work for his print firm, which would later become Currier and Ives. Hiring a woman printer was an unusual move that paid off wonderfully for both Currier and Frances. Frances produced more than two hundred lithographs over the next two decades. Her art found its way into homes, schools, taverns, and business offices across America. Frances overcame the hardships of immigration and defied the expectations and limitations of her gender to become a widely successful early American artist.

Now you will analyze one of Frances Palmer's prints in our digital library.

- Type 'Frances Palmer' into the search bar in the top right hand corner of the digital library home page.
- Select the first search result titled *Across the Continent*

This is one of Frances Palmer's most celebrated pieces. It was published in 1868, one year before the transcontinental railroad was completed.

1. What is the complete title and subtitle of this piece?

The train track divides this image in half. The right half depicts unsettled wilderness. You see mountains and a flowing river. Indigenous people paddle canoes near the riverbank. Two men overlook the scene from horseback in the bottom right corner. The pollution from a train blows into their faces. Buffalo graze in the distance.

2. Following the example above, describe what is on the left side of the image. (What are people doing? Note the people in the bottom left corner. One of the buildings has a sign on it. What does it say? What do you see in the distance? What are the poles running alongside the railroad?)
3. List possible symbolism or historical significance for each of the things depicted on both the left and right sides.
4. What is the overall message the artist is trying to convey?
5. What is the opposite viewpoint of that message?
6. How do you think the artist's own immigrant experience and reason for traveling to America informed this image?

Frances likely never traveled to the western United States. Like many artists of her time, her scenes of the American West are imagined.

7. Do you think prints like this shaped viewers' thoughts and values? Or do you think they reflected what viewers already believed? Why?
8. Frances' prints were usually credited to "F. F. Palmer" or "F. Palmer". What do you think purchasers might have assumed about the identity of the artist, not knowing his or her entire name? How do you think this affected sales of her work?

St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Advertisement

Immigrants had to overcome unthinkable hardships to build their American dreams. In the 18th and early-19th centuries, their journey's often began with days or weeks of travel across Europe by foot, rivercraft, or horse. Once they reached their port of embarkation, they waited days or weeks more for their ship to depart. Their dangerous journey across the ocean took weeks or months more. After all this, it's not surprising many immigrants settled close to their point of arrival. The introduction of steamships cut passage time considerably. In the case of the fastest ships, the trip was a matter of days. Ships also increased in size. Some carried more than 1,000 immigrants in steerage. Steerage was the area reserved for passengers with the cheapest tickets. The conditions in steerage were often appalling.

Wooden beds, known as berths, were stacked two to three high. Two people often shared single berths, with four people sharing doubles. Hatches to the upper decks provided fresh air, but these were locked during rough seas and storms. Passengers trapped below deck were forced to urinate, defecate, and vomit into buckets, which spilled in the churning waves. Diseases like typhoid, cholera, dysentery, and smallpox spread rampant. Food was also in constant shortage. Some ships even required passengers to bring their own provisions, while others provided only enough to keep passengers from starving. In 1847 alone, an estimated 5,000 people died from diseases on ships bound for America.

One of the US's first immigration laws was the 1819 Steerage Act. It attempted to improve cross-Atlantic travel by setting minimum standards. All arriving ships had to provide U.S. customs agents with a written passenger manifest. These manifests documented a passenger's age, sex, occupation, country of origin, and final destination. Captains also had to report the number and names of people who died during the voyage. These customs records were the first to track the national origin of immigrants. The lack of enforcement of the Steerage Act led to the "coffin ships" or "famine ships" of the late 1840s. These carried thousands of impoverished Irish immigrants fleeing the Potato Famine. The nicknames of these ships tell you a lot about the conditions aboard.

For many immigrants, this was only the first half of the journey. As American port cities became increasingly crowded, more people made the trip westward. At the beginning of the 19th century, travel was largely limited to horseback or flatboat. Travel became easier

and less expensive as roads and canals were built, steamboats began plying western rivers, and eventually railroads crisscrossed the country. In the late 19th century, the federal government made a practice of gifting federal lands to railroad companies. These railroad land grants were designed to encourage settlement, while helping railroads raise funds to speed construction. Western railroads created land departments and bureaus of immigration. They opened offices in Europe, to sell land and entice potential settlers to make the long journey westward. Between 1850 and 1871, the United States government transferred millions of acres of land to private ownership. Scholars estimate they ceded anywhere from 7 to 10 percent of all federal land as it stood during that period.

Now you will analyze a primary source that enhances your understanding of the immigrant experience. A broadside is a large sheet of paper printed on only one side. They're often advertisements, but they've also been used to announce government proclamations, support social causes, and entertain.

- Type 'broadside' into the search bar in the top right hand corner of the digital library home page.
- Select the fourth search result titled "Important to All! Bound for the Happy Lands! Low Rates to Arkansas and Missouri".

This illustrated broadside is an advertisement for the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railway, which ran from 1874 to 1917.

Start by reading over the entire piece.

1. Where does this railroad service?
2. How does the railroad promote itself as a superior way to travel?
3. What is the bottom half of the advertisement promoting?
4. How does it entice interested parties? What can this tell you, if anything, about the ideals of the people settling in the area? Or the way they wanted to be perceived?
5. What does this piece tell you about special land agents?

You'll notice this broadside isn't dated. When the date of a historical object is unknown, we have to turn to clues within the piece itself. You could compare the land agent addresses at the bottom of the advertisement to city directories to line up the years those

agents resided at those particular addresses. But there is an even better clue tucked into the text at the bottom of the page. “[The grant] was made more than twenty years ago, and the lands have been withheld from market until the completion of the railroad.”

6. Using the information above, the dates the company operated (listed above), and the knowledge that the federal land grant program ended in 1871, when would you date this piece?
7. What does the price table in the center of the broadside tell you?

The cost of services or commodities have to be understood in the context of the value of the American dollar at that time. To adjust for inflation, you have to take into account a variety of factors. You can use online inflation calculators to get a rough idea of the what something might cost in today’s dollars.

8. Use the following inflation calculator <https://www.in2013dollars.com/> and your answer to question 6 to convert the following fares:
 - a. From Chicago, Ill. to Little Rock and Return
 - b. From Detroit Michigan to Little Rock
 - c. From Springfield, Ill. to Little Rock
 - d. From Pittsburgh, Pa. to Little Rock and Return
9. How do you think the cost of travel limited the economic and social diversity of settlers coming to the region?



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