



Comparing Populations Through Arkansas History Using the 5 Themes of Geography*

Materials

- ☆ Relief map of Arkansas
- ☆ *Arkansas and the Land* by Tom Foti and Gerald Hanson

Goal

To recognize the six natural divisions of Arkansas and its population diversity throughout Arkansas history using the five themes of geography

Objectives

1. Students will identify the six natural divisions of Arkansas.
2. Using the five themes of geography, students will identify the population and settlement patterns throughout Arkansas history associated with the six natural divisions of Arkansas.

The Five Themes of Geography

1. Location (location of things);
2. Place (difference in places and reasons for difference – climate, physical features, people, traditions);
3. Human/Environment Interaction (relationships among people and places, changes in relationships based on environment);
4. Movement (patterns of movement of people, products and information; transportation modes, exports and imports, communication to move ideas);
5. Regions (division of Arkansas for study – can include area, language, political divisions, religion, vegetation).



Activities Using the Five Theme of Geography

LOCATION: Create an outline map of Arkansas from *memory* and mark the six natural divisions (grades 5-8). Students at lower grades may wish to create a puzzle of the six natural divisions (grades K-5). This activity may be done in small groups or individually.

LOCATION: Identify the climate, geology, soil, hydrology, vegetation, plants and animals that are indigenous to Arkansas on the outline map created by students. (grades 5-8)

LOCATION: Produce an atlas showing major Arkansas cities or communities, natural features (i.e., Buffalo National River) and landmarks (e.g., Old State House Museum, University of Arkansas) (grades 5-8).

* Information for this lesson was obtained from the National Geographic Society, the National Geographic and National Council for the Social Studies.

Activities Using the Five Theme of Geography

PLACE: Craft an ABC cook to describe the place in which they live, using a letter to describe a unique physical feature, person, or tradition from your community or geographic area. An unfamiliar reader should be able to have a good idea of what life is like in your geographic area after reading (grades K-8).

PLACE: Invite students to form pen-pal relationships with students in other parts of Arkansas. Students should ask for samples of soils (baby jars work well) or plants/flowers (grades 5-12).

PLACE: Create a postage stamp or post card by assigning each student a county of Arkansas. The student must research the county and design a postage stamp/post card to be used by its citizens. Place physical features, persons of note or landmarks that identify that county (e.g., Hempstead County – watermelons; Sebastian County – Fort Smith National Historic Site). Students should be able to present their stamps/post cards to class and explain why they chose the images they used.

Post students work on bulletin and number each card. Give students a week to read all the cards on their own and jot down their best guesses as to the place. Who correctly guessed the most places? (grades 5-12)

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT/INTERACTION: Read aloud excerpts from Arkansas settlers that are enclosed in this lesson. Talk about the different persons and how they feel about each of them. What does each person symbolize? How is each settler affected by where they lived? (grades 5-12)

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT/INTERACTION: Collect population statistics for your community or county for as long as they are available. Create graphs to show how the town's population has changed over the decades. How has the population change affected your town. What events have influenced your population (e.g., economics, warfare, natural disaster, discrimination, land scarcity, personal reasons, other)? (grades 5-12)

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT/INTERACTION: Collect photographs of your community over the years. How is the town different in appearance today from how it looked many years ago? Create a school display. (grades 5-12)

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT/INTERACTION: Allow students to pick one of the six geographic regions of Arkansas to live in and have students make a list of things they would want to have to have a good life during various periods in Arkansas history (1830, 1855, 1863, 1870, 1880, 1895, 1920s, 1930s, 1940s). Rationalize which items were available and if they really need them. How many of those items could be found in the natural environment? Which had to be made by people? How would they go about obtaining those items? (grades 5-12)

Best source for this information: Arkansas GenWeb Project (rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/ar/arfiles.htm); census.gov (1999 returns for Arkansas available, estimates only).

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT/INTERACTION: Conduct a “what if” exercise using the question, “What if the yard outside your home was never touched (i.e., if you did not mow or water, plant shrubs or rake leaves). Talk about or draw pictures to show how it would look if left alone. (grades 5-8)

MOVEMENT: Where do products used in Arkansas originate? Collect data on products that students use and find out 1) where they come from, 2) what percentage originate in Arkansas, 3) how products imported to Arkansas get to the state (modes of transportation). (grades 5-12)

Best source for this information: Arkansas Economic Development Commission, “A Natural for Companies/A Natural for People” (aedc.state.ar.us).

MOVEMENT: Find out about your family’s roots by plotting your family tree on a chart. See if any of the roots of other students overlap with others in the class. Let students tell what they know about when, why and how their ancestors came to Arkansas. (grades 5-12)

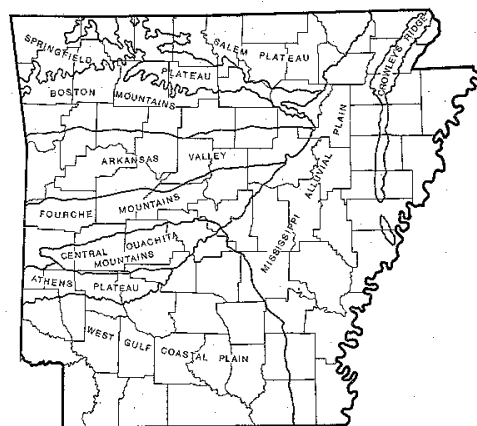
MOVEMENT: Conduct an oral history report with older citizens of your community (family members, neighbors) about their earliest memories. Ask questions about transportation, food-ways, clothing customs, education, society Deposit these interviews in your school or local library so that others may enjoy hearing them. (grades 5-12)

REGIONS: Have student create a map of the area in which they live and go to school (i.e., the immediate neighborhood). Each student can add a pin to indicate the location of his/her home. (grades 5-8)

REGIONS: Create a BINGO game that lists the six regions of Arkansas on the cards. Place county outlines on the BINGO card and have the teacher prepare questions that describe the county (e.g., Sylvanus Phillips settled in east Arkansas in 1795. This county is named for him OR “This county has a tallgrass prairie – Arkansas County) The first person to complete a BINGO card will receive a prize! (grades 5-12)

REGIONS: Identify regions in your own community (neighborhoods). Investigate why those neighborhoods or areas developed where they did, including the historical background behind them (e.g., Argenta was a railroad center and later became North Little Rock). They might have developed around factories or farms, a church (Germans in the Arkansas River Valley), a hill or lake. What can you learn about your community history from its neighborhoods?

Is there part of your community that is a “shopping region,” “factory region,” or “farm region.” List other features that might be considered part of your community (e.g., Civil War battlefields, man-made lakes). (grades 5-12).



Correlation to Arkansas History Guidelines of 1997:

- 1.1.2., 1.1.4., 2.1.1., 2.1.2., 2.1.3., 3.1.1., 3.1.2., 3.1.3., 4.1.1., 4.1.2., 4.1.3., 4.1.4., 5.1.3., 5.1.6.(K-3); 1.1.6., 1.1.9., 2.1.4., 2.1.5., 3.1.4., 3.1.6., 4.1.5., 4.1.6., 4.1.7., 4.1.8., 4.1.9., 5.1.7., 5.1.10. (4-6); 1.1.15., 2.1.7., 2.1.8., 2.1.10., 2.1.11., 3.1.8., 3.1.10., 3.1.11., 3.1.12., 3.1.13., 4.1.11., 5.1.18., 6.1.15 (7-12).

REFLECTIONS ON ARKANSAS FROM CITIZENS AND VISITORS:

- From Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Journal of a Tour into the Interior of Missouri and Arkansas* (London, 1821) and cited in *Arkansas and the Land* by Tom Foti and Gerald Hanson. Schoolcraft visited Arkansas between 1819 and 1820:

“The prairies, which commence at the distance of a mile west of this river, are the most extensive, rich and beautiful, of any which I have ever seen west of the Mississippi River. They are covered by a coarse wild grass, which attains so great a height that it completely hides a man on horseback riding through it. The deer and elk abound in this quarter, and the buffalo is occasionally seen in droves upon the prairie and in the open high-land woods. Along the margin of the river is found a vigorous growth of forest-trees, some of which attain an almost incredible size. The lands consist of a rich black alluvial soil, apparently deep, and suitable for corn, flax, and hemp. The river banks are skirted with cane, to the exclusion of the all other underbrush. The lands rise gently from the river for a mile, terminating in high-lands, without bluffs, with a handsome growth of hickory and oak, and a soil which is probably adapted for wheat, rye, oats, and potatoes. Little prairies of a mile or two in extent are sometimes seen in the midst of a heavy forest, resembling some old cultivated fields, which have been allowed to run into grass.”

- Benjamin McCulloch, a Texas Ranger and a Civil War general, passed through Arkansas in 1859 on a journey from California to Memphis, Tennessee. He was convinced that the roads in Arkansas were a “Yankee plot” to make stage line service intolerable. He was delayed 3-1/2 hours at Fort Smith, 5 hours at Dardanelle, and 7 hours at Plummer’s Station [Plummerville]. It took his stage 13 hours to travel approximately 40 miles to Little Rock, where he encountered a 10-hour stage delay. He called the roads in Arkansas “a complete sham.”
- Thomas Nuttall visited the settlement of Cadron (Faulkner County) in 1819 and was not impressed with the four families he encountered:

“A considerable concourse of travellers and some emigrants began to make their appearance at this imaginary town. The only tavern, very ill provided, was consequently crowded with all sorts of company. It contained only two tentable rooms, built of logs, with hundreds of crevices still left open, notwithstanding the severity of the season. Every reasonable and rational amusement appeared here to be swallowed up in dram-drinking, jockeying [horse racing] and gambling; even our landlord, in defiance of the law, was often the ringleader of what was his duty to suppress.”

- Remembrance of the Great Flood of 1927 by William Cobb, who remembered the levee breaking at Pendelton, Arkansas (taken from *Deep'n As It Comes* by Pete Daniel, pp. 20-21)

“On that night the levee broke [April 22, 1927]...my daddy went out and he could see the water coming across the field. Our house was about 18 inches off the ground, and he come back in the house and he say, ‘I see the water coming across the field there.’ It had done filled up a big slough between our house and the levee, and it had got level out there. So he come back in the house and stayed about 20 minutes, went back there and said, ‘The water done made it up here to the house and it’s running across the bottom step.’ The house had three steps...Then he went on back into the house and then in about 20 minutes more the water had done got up to the top step. And about 10 o’clock that night we were moving a few bed things up on the loft part of the house. And there’s where we stayed until the next morning, and we stayed up there two nights and three days. Finally, a seaplane came along. My daddy had done cut a hole where he could look out on the outside and he was waving a white rag when that seaplane come by. And in about two hours after then, it was, a gas boat pulled up there and taken us all to the levee. We lived up there on the levee until the water went down.”

READING LIST:

Allsop, Fred W. *The Folklore of Romantic Arkansas* (1931).

Byrn, Marcus Lafayette. *The Life and Adventures of an Arkansas Doctor* (1853).

Dougan, Michael B. *Arkansas Odyssey: The Saga of Arkansas from Prehistoric Times to Present* (Little Rock: August House Publishers, 1994).

Featherstonhaugh, George William (pronounced Fanshaw). *Excursion through the Slave States* (1844).

Gerstacker, Frederich. *Wild Sports in the Far West* (1854).

Irving, Washington. *The Creole Village* (based on life at Arkansas Post).

McDonough, Nancy. *Garden Sass: A Catalog of Arkansas Folkways* (1975).

Nuttall, Thomas. *A Journal of Travels into the Arkansas Territory, During the Year 1819, With Occasional Observations on the Manner of the Aborigines* (1821).

Randolph, Vance. *The Ozarks – An American Survival of Primitive Society* (1931) and *We Always Lie to Strangers* (1951).

Schoolcraft, Henry Rowe. *A View of the Lead Mines (1819) and Journal of a Tour in the Interior of Missouri and Arkansas* (1821).

Thorpe, Thomas Bangs. *The Big Bear of Arkansas* (1840s).

Other Arkansas-related authors: Charles Fenton Mercer Noland (creator of Pete Whetstone of Devil’s Fork image), Albert Pike (Arkansas travel accounts and satires of the state in 1850s, editor of *Arkansas Advocate*), Thomas Hart Benton, Octave Thanet (poet), Fay Hempstead (poet laureate of Arkansas), Bernie Babcock, John Gould Fletcher, Maya Angelou, Dee Brown and Lily Peter.