

- On a map of North America, students should mark the routes taken by each American explorer during his career on the frontier. Make sure to mark key places on the map, such as the South Pass, the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Cumberland Gap.
- Many times experiences and stories tend to grow in the telling. Some explorers of the American West became larger than life, even in their own lifetimes. Have students research a particular story about a selected individual such as Daniel Boone (See *Daniel Boone: Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* by John Mack Faragher for sources) and explain where truth starts and mythology leaves off in their view. Students can also take a relatively mundane event from their own lives and embellish it to create a legend.
- Watch clips from movies displaying images of the "Wild West." Focus on portrayals of Native Americans and European Americans. Based on students' knowledge and research, have them determine which portrayals are accurate and which are exaggerated. Why do students think the West has always been glorified in the media?
- Zebulon Pike may have been a spy for the American government, attempting to gather information about Spanish territory. Have the class write spy reports that Pike may have prepared for the government, detailing his expedition along the Rio Grande as he explored the southwestern region of the continent. Students can also include hand-drawn maps that represent some of the areas that were part of Pike's military missions.
- Jedediah Smith pioneered the route that became the Oregon Trail. Share excerpts from a book about this important passage to the West, such as *Life on the Oregon Trail* by Gary L. Blackwood (Lucent Books, 1999). Brainstorm a list of factors that might have prompted people to pack up their families and move thousands of miles in a covered wagon to the West. (i.e., gold, farmland, endless forests, overcrowded cities, search for religious freedom or development of railroads). Students can imagine that they are traveling along the Oregon Trail, and write journal entries that describe their experiences.
- Zebulon Pike called the area now encompassing the Great Plains the "Great American Desert." Speculate on the effect that this observation could have had on the minds of prospective settlers. Have students research the climatic conditions of this area and describe some of the worst hazards of the prairie states.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at www.libraryvideo.com

www.beckwourth.org/

This Web site devoted to James Beckwourth provides a wealth of information about this frontiersman, including biographical material and maps of the Beckwourth Trail.

(Continued)

www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/jed.html

This excerpt from the actual diary of Jedediah Strong Smith details his crossing of the Great Salt Lake Desert.

xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/HNS/Mtmn/home.html

"The Mountain Men: Pathfinders of the West" Web site presents information about the lifestyle of mountain men of the frontier as fur traders and guides, in addition to including detailed maps. Several mountain men are highlighted, including Jedediah Smith.

Suggested Print Resources

- Allen, John Logan. *Jedediah Smith and the Mountain Men of the American West*. Chelsea House Publishers, New York, NY; 1991.
- Calvert, Patricia. *The American Frontier*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, New York, NY; 1997.
- Collins, James L. *The Mountain Men*. Franklin Watts, New York, NY; 1996.
- Kozar, Richard F. *Daniel Boone and the Exploration of the Frontier*. Chelsea House Publishers, Philadelphia, PA; 2000.
- Sanford, William R. and Carl R. Green. *Kit Carson: Frontier Scout*. Enslow Publishers, Springfield, NJ; 1996.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Paul J. Sanborn

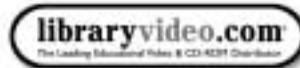
Information Specialist, Devon Preparatory School

COMPLETE LIST OF TITLES

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| • THE AMERICAN FRONTIER | • LEWIS & CLARK |
| • CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS | • FERDINAND MAGELLAN |
| • CORTÉS & PIZARRO | • MARCO POLO |
| • ENGLISH EXPLORERS | • PORTUGUESE EXPLORERS |
| • FRENCH EXPLORERS | • SPANISH EXPLORERS |
| • HISTORY OF EXPLORATION | • THE VIKINGS |
| • HENRY HUDSON | |

Teacher's Guides Included
and Available Online at:

800-843-3620



Copyright 2000 by Schlessinger Media, a division of Library Video Company

P.O. Box 580, Wynnwood, PA 19096 • 800-843-3620

Executive Producers, Andrew Schlessinger & Tracy Mitchell
Programs produced and directed by Issembert Productions, Inc.

All rights reserved.



THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting programs in the video series *Explorers of the World*.

Before Viewing: Give students an introduction to the program by relating aspects of the historical overview to them. Select pre-viewing discussion questions and vocabulary to provide a focus for students when they view the program.

After Viewing: Review the program and vocabulary, and use the follow-up questions and activities to inspire continued discussion. Encourage students to research the topic further with the Internet and print resources provided.



Historical Overview

The United States expanded across the great North American continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans through the efforts of adventurous and determined individuals. People like Kit Carson, Jedediah Smith, Zebulon Pike, Daniel Boone and Jim Beckwourth embodied the American ideals of rugged individualism, freedom and thirst for opportunity. These mountain men explored a huge expanse of territory inhabited by a variety of Native American people, encountered wild and dangerous animals, and trekked through rugged terrain that would have daunted all but the bravest of explorers. Their exploits helped the United States gain valuable information about the unexplored West, provided the impetus for future settlement in the vast tracts of land on the frontier and opened up the country's rich mineral wealth and farmland.

Time Line

1734 — Daniel Boone is born in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

1775 — Boone begins blazing the Wilderness Trail into Kentucky. Boonesborough, the first permanent settlement in Kentucky, is founded.

1779 — Zebulon Pike is born in Lambertton, New Jersey.

1798 — James Beckwourth is born in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

c.1799 — Jedediah Smith is born in Bainbridge, New York.

1805 — Pike begins his explorations of the West.

1809 — Christopher (Kit) Carson is born in Madison County, Kentucky.

1813 — Pike is killed in the War of 1812 at the Battle of York.

1820 — Boone dies at his son's home in Missouri.

1822 — Smith joins General William Ashley's Fur Trading Company.

1824 — Smith rediscovers the South Pass through the Rocky Mountains. James Beckwourth joins Ashley's Fur Trading Company.

1826 — Smith travels across the Mojave Desert to California.

1831 — Smith is killed by Comanches.

1841 — Carson begins exploring the West with John C. Frémont.

1850 — Beckwourth discovers the main pass through the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

1853 — Carson becomes an Indian agent in Taos, New Mexico.

c.1866 — Beckwourth dies while living with the Crow Indians.

1868 — Carson dies in Colorado.

Vocabulary

American frontier — The uncharted land of North America west of the Mississippi River. The western frontier served as the boundary of the United States from the late 18th to the mid-19th century. This boundary moved continually westward and by the mid 1800s, America had expanded from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans.

explorer — A person who travels in search of a goal, such as wealth, information or colonization. *(Continued)*

Lewis and Clark expedition — The journey from 1804 to 1806 made by Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and their Corps of Discovery. The trip was initiated by President Thomas Jefferson after the Louisiana Purchase to investigate the land west of the Mississippi. The expedition traveled from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean and back again.

mountain men — Pioneers living in the western regions of North America. Most mountain men lived as fur trappers and traders, and often served as scouts and guides for westward expeditions. Mountain men often traded with Native Americans and adopted their ways of life, like clothing styles and methods of travel.

Boonesborough — The first permanent settlement in Kentucky founded by Daniel Boone in 1775.

legend — A story or tale that is often exaggerated.

Quaker — A Christian religious group, also known as the Society of Friends. Founded in 17th-century England during the Protestant Reformation, Quakers believe in an independent approach to religion and strict discipline, and reject war and weapons.

Wilderness Road — A trail blazed by Daniel Boone in 1775 that extended from eastern Virginia, over the Cumberland Gap and into Kentucky.

Louisiana Purchase — The United States' acquisition of land in the middle and northwestern part of North America, which was purchased from France in 1803. This land purchase doubled the size of the United States, gave America control over the valuable Mississippi River trade and provided rich mineral sources, forests and wildlife.

William Henry Ashley — (c.1778-1838) A fur trapper and trader who established a fur trapping company. Both Jedediah Smith and Jim Beckwourth were members of Ashley's trading company.

Oregon Trail — A route across the Northwest region of the United States that runs from modern-day Missouri to Oregon. This trail was used by many settlers traveling to the West in the 1800s.

John Frémont — (1813-1890) An officer in the United States Army's Topographical Engineers who explored the West with Kit Carson. Frémont drew maps and wrote reports to the government that substantiated the United States' claim to the West.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- The people who ventured into the American West during the 19th century were a hardy, brave breed. Have the class discuss what character traits they believe would serve such an adventurer well. Why would these characteristics be important?
- Much has been discussed on the rights and wrongs of exploiting the West, taking land and valuable mineral resources from people already living on this western territory. Divide the class into groups and debate the issue from the point of view of the native people already living on these lands and the settlers moving to the West. *(Continued)*

• As cultures come in contact, the possibility for violence and death is high. As European Americans flooded the West, tensions rose with Native Americans. Have the class brainstorm possible strategies that could have been taken to reduce violence and achieve cooperation between these cultures during westward expansion.

• What does it mean to say that the West was "won"? Won by whom? What was the battle? Discuss with students their thoughts about whether or not the West was ever truly won.

Focus Questions

1. What positions did Kit Carson hold during his lifetime in the West?
2. Where did the people come from who flooded into the West during the 19th century?
3. What kept the Western frontier moving gradually westward?
4. What contributions did Daniel Boone make to the expansion of the United States?
5. What were Zebulon Pike's main contributions from his travels?
6. What successes did Jedediah Smith have during his expeditions?
7. What was the Oregon Trail? Who used it and for what purpose?
8. Who was Jim Beckwourth? What were his contributions to the expansion of the American frontier?
9. What did John Frémont accomplish in the exploration of the West?
10. Which tribal uprising did Kit Carson have to quell? Why did this group of Native Americans begin their raiding?

Follow-up Discussion

- Discuss with students the meaning of the word "explorer." Have the class determine the similarities and differences between a seafaring explorer like Christopher Columbus or Ferdinand Magellan and the explorers of the American frontier.
- Many explorers of the American frontier adopted the culture of the local native groups, including clothing style and methods of transportation. Encourage students to discuss why these mountain men generally respected the Native Americans and their culture.

Follow-up Activities

- Break the class into small groups representing the various Native American groups affected by the mass migration of European Americans into their lands, like the Shawnee, Crow, Blackfeet and Arikara. Each group should research the Native American nation it represents, in terms of its culture and allegiances with other native groups. Have the class form a United Nations-type assembly to deal with the invasion of their territory. Different tribal groups should maintain their historical rivalries and histories of non-cooperation. See if some common approach can be argued out. *(Continued)*