

Richfield: A Portrait of an Early Utah Town

Summary

Photographs and stories bring history to life. This lesson includes a personal narrative describing a historic photograph and encourages students to consider the stories surrounding their own community. Students also use what they have learned to design a new Utah community.

Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

Materials

Handout: ["Richfield, Utah, Original Narrative"](#) (pdf)

Worksheet: ["Photo Detective"](#) (pdf)

Worksheet ["Building a Community"](#) (pdf)

Photo: [Richfield, Utah, between 1896 and 1904](#) (pdf)

Digital or disposable cameras (optional to be furnished by the school or teacher)

Lined and/or drawing paper

Background for Teachers

Enduring Understanding

Students will understand how photographs and stories enrich history.

Communities develop to meet the needs of people. Students will recognize that all communities organize spaces and structures for worship, education, government, and business.

Essential Questions

What do most community centers in Utah municipalities have in common?

How have Utah cities and towns changed over time?

What changes might we expect for the future?

Objectives

Students will study an early photo of Richfield, Utah, read the original description, and predict how Richfield has changed over time.

Students will recognize how municipalities meet the needs of citizens by providing places for worship, business, education, transportation, etc.

Instructional Procedures

Setting the Stage

Show an interesting photograph of yourself, your family, or a family activity. Ask students to look at the picture. Explain that students are to be "photograph detectives." Their job is to study the picture and find clues that might help them learn something about you or your family.

Encourage students to examine dress and hair styles, attempt to determine the date, location of the photo, the ages of people, etc.,

Share student observations and conclusions.

Ask students to guess as to the use of the buildings.

Explain that student detectives will travel back in time to the early days of Utah. They will study an old photograph and identify clues as to how people lived during certain periods of time.

Activity: Early Richfield, Utah

Display or distribute the [photo of Richfield, Utah](#) (pdf), ["Richfield, Utah, Original Narrative"](#) (pdf) and ["Photo Detective" worksheet](#) (pdf) to students.

Identify Richfield on a Utah map.

Read the narrative as a class or in small groups depending on the skill of the class. Explain that this document and photo was donated to the Utah Historical Society by Pearl Jacobson. (Define unfamiliar words such as banquet, tabernacle, dedicated, belfry, and pinnacle.)

Assign students to work alone or with a partner. They are to study the picture and narrative. Students will look for clues and make assumptions about the town while filling out their "Photo Detective" worksheet. Ask students to share their findings. Ask how they identified the school building, the tabernacle, the belfry, and the location of the photographer.

Ask interested students to read their descriptions of the city.

Discuss what life might have been like before electricity or before many people had the use of an automobile.

Discuss what can be learned about a city's transportation, daily life, recreational activities, religion, businesses, etc. by studying photographs.

Activity: Predict How Richfield, Utah, Might Look Today

Ask students to think of ways in which their lives have changed since the previous school year. Share a few student ideas.

Explain that change can be easy to recognize or very subtle, but is always inevitable.

Ask students to predict how they think that the city and life in Richfield has changed since the photograph was taken. (The roads have been paved and some buildings may have been torn down along with new ones replacing them. More traffic moves along the streets, and there are probably different businesses.)

Examine the photograph of present day Richfield (obtained off website www.richfieldcity.com).

Discuss and compare your predictions with actual information.

Activity: Record Your Community

Ask students to photograph or sketch an area of your neighborhood.

Distribute disposable cameras or sketch paper, pencil, and clipboards.

Assign each student to photograph or sketch a different scene or building in their community.

Assign students to write a personal description of the scene to help future people to understand what our neighborhood looked like, who lived there, what the buildings were used for, etc. Include addresses, interesting facts, etc. Remind them to sign their narrative.

Compile the pictures and descriptions and bind them as a present day history that can be shared with lower grade students or parents.

Activity: Building a Community

Explain that creating successful communities is not an easy task. Not all Utah cities and towns were successful. Many early towns failed to grow and have been forgotten. Richfield is an early Utah town that survived the changes of time.

Discuss the various factors that might make the difference between a town that survives and one that becomes a ghost town.

Distribute "[Building a Community](#)" worksheet (pdf).

Divide students into small groups. Explain that people in Utah settled in cities and towns for a variety of reasons. Available resources, climate, and geography affected the way people lived their lives.

Explain that students will use what they know about cities and towns to create their own community and community story to share with the class.

Bibliography

This lesson plan is part of the Utah League of Cities and Towns [This Must be Utah! A Teacher's Guide to Utah Cities and Towns](#)

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