

Program Name: Kansas Cultural History

Artist: The Kansas Settlers Band

Special Requirements:

Large, open space, gym or auditorium preferred; space needs to be at least 10 feet tall, 20 feet wide, and 15 feet deep, on the same level as the students; electrical outlet; one chair; space should be available 45 minutes before performance for set-up and 30 minutes after performance for break-down.

Special Points of Interest:

Three distinct political groups occupied Kansas in the 1850's: pro-slavers, free-staters and abolitionists. These factions fought until 1861 when Kansas became a free state. This era became forever known as "Bleeding Kansas".

Performance Description

Just as droughts, floods, and tornados affect our lives today, the environment was an even greater influence on the lives of pioneer Kansans in the 1800s. Using songs, stories, and a captivating set, the four members of the Kansas Settlers Band explore their own histories to teach students how people came to settle in Kansas.

The Kansas Settlers Band, accompanying themselves on banjo and guitar, sing folk songs that reveal a great deal about pioneer life. These songs tell stories about hardships (*Little Old Sod Shanty on the Claim*), westward expansion of the railroad (*John Henry*), and Kansas' promise of freedom (*In Kansas*). These songs also tell us what pioneer Kansans did in their

leisure time, such as play party games and square dances.

Members of the Kansas Settlers Band bring these stories to life by sharing tales from their own family histories, and encouraging students to learn how their families came to Kansas.



Curriculum Connections & Educational Objectives

Students will:

- Develop an appreciation of those who made our lives in Kansas possible
- Explore Kansas history as something that happened to real people

History:

- Understands the broadly defined areas of state and local historical events

Music:

- Identifies (by genre or style) music from various historical periods and cultures

Artist Bio: The Kansas Settlers Band



List of Resources:

Books:

Home on the Range: The Kansas Pioneers and Their Music
by Kelly Werts,
Sara Quinn (Illustrator)
Wichita Eagle and Beacon
Publishing Co. Inc.
(September, 1996)
ISBN: 1880652153

Children of the Wild West
by Russell Freedman
Clarion Books; Reprint
edition (October 1, 1990)
ISBN: 0395547857

The Laura Ingalls Wilder
Songbook : Favorite
Songs from The Little
House Books
by Eugenia Garson, Garth
Williams
Harpercollins; Reprint
edition
(October 1, 1992)
ISBN: 0060219343

Contact KCYA for more information about their other programs
816.531.4022
KCYA.org

3. Interview a family member about how they came to Kansas. Who was the first in the family to come to Kansas and when? Write down your findings, as well as a family story

The Kansas Settlers Band consists of Diane Bulan, Chris Hudson, Sam Wright, and Franci Talamantez-Witte..

Diane Bulan is a professional actor, director, acting coach, puppeteer, electrician, and stage manager. She has been a teaching artist for KCYA since 1998. Diane received a BA in Theatre and Film Studies from the University of Kansas in 1993.

Chris Hudson received his Bachelor's degree in 1996 from the UMKC Conservatory of Music. A talented guitarist and instructor, Chris has played at the Kemper Museum, Eden Alley and currently teaches private

instruction at KCYA's Community School of the Arts.

Sam Wright earned his BFA in Theatre from Emporia State University in 2002. Since graduating, he has acted for The Coterie Children's Theatre and Wyandotte Players. When not performing, Sam spends his time waiting tables in Westport, recording music and playwriting.

Franci Talamantez-Witte is a local performer, teacher, and director. She studied theatre and dance at Kansas State University. Franci performs all around the KC area and has been teaching at KCYA's Community School of the Arts since the summer of 2018.

Vocabulary

Government claim: a piece of land bought from the government at a low price (usually in sections of 160 acres) in exchange for which, the buyer agrees to care for and live on the land for a period of years

Plains: flat, short-grass lands, stretching from Mexico to Canada and including the western half of Kansas.

Prairie: treeless and mostly flat grasslands, found in the eastern half of Kansas where native tall grasses once flourished

Settler: one who moves to a new, usually unsettled area to live

Sod house: settlers' house made out of the top layer of soil and the grass attached to it

Post-Performance Activities

1. Talk about the program you saw. How was the settler's lifestyle different from our own? Was it harder? Easier? How was life back then similar to ours?
2. Compare the geographies of Kansas and Missouri. How are they similar/different?
3. Interview a family member about how they came to Kansas. Who was the first in the family to come to Kansas and when? Write down your findings, as well as a family story that relates to Kansas cultural history. Share with the class.
4. Make up some tall tales about our lives today in Kansas.
5. Look at some other important historical events of 1861, the year Kansas became a state. Who was President? What war began that year?