

# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

## *Educational Materials*

Please forward to teachers

### **ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:**

**Jeff Davis:** *The Oregon Trail*

**Grade Levels:** 6-12

In 1846, the Oregon Trail opened the way west and 23-year-old Bostonian Francis Parkman was one of the first travelers. He traveled to Fort Laramie and then headed south to Santa Fe before returning east to write The Oregon Trail, the most widely read book about the opening of the Great West. This program features Irish immigrants, African-American roustabouts, Sioux Indians and more traveling on trains, flat boats, push boats, carts, horseback, and wagons. Students will hear many instruments played along the Trail.

### **LEARNING GOALS:**

1. To explore the Oregon Trail and the Westward Movement.
2. To study the importance of the Westward Movement in the development of American continental culture.
3. To get familiarized with the instruments played along the Oregon Trail.

### **PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY:** *Going West*

Discuss transcontinental travel today. Study topographic maps of North America. Given the importance of the West in American history, discuss the variety of travel modes available circa 1846-1876 and the advantages of each.

### **POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY:** *Parkman's Journey*

Discuss each mode of transportation mentioned, who Francis Parkman was, and why he was important. Review the current events of 1846, and study a particular region to investigate the difficulty of transcontinental travel at that time.

### **CURRICULUM LINKS:**

History and Social Science, English Language Arts, Music

## PRE-ACTIVITY: GOING WEST

### LEARNING GOALS:

To study the importance of the Westward Movement in America. To study the culture along the Oregon Trail.

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

books and recordings, CD player

### TIME:

one 45 minute class

### Step 1:

**Ask:** How many students have traveled across America other than via airplane? Discuss the details of their trips (vehicle, length, route, meals, sightseeing, number of miles per day traveled, speed, strangers encountered, small town stops, etc.).

### Step 2:

**Discuss** the West as a resource in American history.

### Step 3:

Have students **study** a topographic map of North America to consider distances and trail obstacles. Have them consider one challenge (fording a single wagon and family across a river). Identify the factors that would have to be considered prior to a successful trip.

### Step 4:

How many modes of transportation were available to emigrants in 1846? Which would have been the fastest/slowest/most practical? Since the trip might have taken half a year, can they imagine what the preparations for leaving might have been like?

### EXTENSIONS:

- 1) Have students **draw** a map of the Oregon Trail and calculate the distance to travel it.
- 2) Have students **study** the history of the Oregon Trail and why many Americans were moving West during the middle of the 19th century.



## POST-ACTIVITY: PARKMAN'S JOURNEY

### LEARNING GOAL:

To review aspects of the program as well as the current events of 1846.

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

books, recordings

### TIME:

one 45 minute class

### TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:

\*A good source for folk music recordings is:

Andy's Front Hall  
Box 307  
Vorheesville, NY 12186

### Step 1:

**Discuss** the students' favorite songs from the performance. Did they learn anything unexpected? Did they see any familiar instruments? Which if any music seemed difficult to play?

### Step 2:

**Discuss** the different kinds of travel mentioned in the performance. Who was Francis Parkman and where was he from? Where did he go to college? How old was he when he traveled west? Where did his trip begin and what route did he follow? Who were some of the people he met along the way? Why is he important apart from traveling the Trail?

### Step 3:

**Ask:** How many states would Parkman's trip cross today? On a map of any one of those states, have students count the number of rivers that would have to be crossed. How many rivers are there between Boston and Albany that we would cross easily?

### Step 4:

**Discuss** the historical/political circumstances in 1846. Have students refresh their memories of the Mexican War. When was gold discovered in California?

### EXTENSIONS:

\* Create a timeline of the significant advancements of the late 1800's in America.



## Jeff Davis: *The Oregon Trail*

Grade Levels: 6-12

### RESOURCES:

Lomax, Alan, *Folk Songs of North America*. Doubleday, 1960

Parkman, Francis. *The Oregon Trail*

Seeger, Ruth Crawford, *American Folk Songs for Children*, Doubleday, 1948

Warner, Anneand Frank, *Traditional American Folk Songs*, Syracuse University Press, 1984

Recordings: *The Anthology of American Folk Music*, Smithsonian-Folkways Recordings, 1997;  
*The Alan Lomax Collection*, Rounder Records, Cambridge, MA

### VOCABULARY:

cholera

epidemic

manifest destiny

topography

emigrant

ford

pioneer

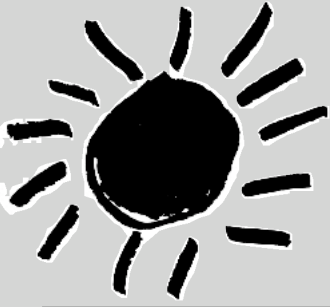
transcontinental

### ABOUT THE PERFORMER:

**Jeff Davis** is one of the nation's foremost performers, interpreters and collectors of traditional American folk songs, tunes, and stories. He plays banjo, guitar, bones, spoons, fiddle, Appalachian dulcimer, Jew's Harp, Native American flute, and several instruments in the mandolin family. Jeff appears at Sturbridge Village and Mystic Seaport regularly, and performs at folk festivals in the United States and abroad. He has recorded for *Flying Fish* and *Minstrel Records*. Jeff received the 1992 UMass-Dartmouth "Eisteddfod" Award for service to the traditional arts. He graduated from Duke University with a degree in Russian history, but spent much time in North Carolina learning songs from mountain musicians. After a brief tenure as a middle school history teacher, Jeff began playing music full time at schools, clubs, and festivals. Jeff has been a lecturer for the Smithsonian National Associates Program and has performed for school and community groups through the New York State Council for the Arts and the Ohio Arts Council-Arts in Education program. With his friend Jeff Warner, Jeff Davis has recorded two volumes of traditional music for children, *Old Time Songs for Kids* and *Two Little Boys*.

### ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For over 45 years, YA has distinguished itself as the vital link between Massachusetts schoolchildren (K-12) and more than 95 of the region's most accomplished actors, dancers, singers, musicians, and storytellers. Its 36 ensembles offer 57 interactive arts programs that represent a range of cultures, historical periods and artistic disciplines. YA is unique in its flexibility to offer interactive performances, tailor-made residencies, workshops, teacher-training, curriculum planning and multi-year projects. All programs include educational materials and satisfy local, state and/or federal arts education standards.



# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

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(617) 629-YAMA (9262)

<http://www.yamass.org>

## MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

**Jeff Davis:**

*American Sampler, The Oregon Trail*

<i>Language Arts 6</i>	...describe and analyze how oral dialects differ from each other in English
<i>Language Arts 9</i>	...identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>History 1</i>	Chronology and Cause...understand the chronological order of historical events and recognize the complexity of historical cause and effect.
<i>History 2</i>	Historical Understanding...understand the meaning, implications, and import of historical events, while recognizing the contingency and unpredictability of history.
<i>History 8</i>	Places and Regions of the World...identify and explain the location and features of places and systems organized over time.
<i>History 13</i>	American and Massachusetts Economic history...describe the development of the American, New England, Massachusetts economy.
<i>Arts-Music 1</i>	Singing...sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
<i>Arts-Music 3</i>	Playing Instruments...play instruments, alone and with others, to perform a varied repertoire of music.
<i>Arts-Music 5</i>	Critical Response...describe and analyze their own music and the music of others using appropriate music vocabulary.
<i>Arts-Music 6</i>	Purpose and Meaning in the Arts...describe the purpose for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created.
<i>Arts-Music 7</i>	Roles of Artists in Communities...describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and art institutions in societies of the past and present.
<i>Arts-Music 8</i>	Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change...demonstrate understanding of styles, influence, change.
<i>Arts-Music 9</i>	Inventions, Technologies, and the Arts...describe and analyze how performing and visual artists use and have used materials, inventions, and technologies in their work.
<i>Arts-Music 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.