

# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

## *Educational Materials*

Please forward to teachers

### **ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE**

Jeff Davis *The Oregon Trail*

Grade levels: K-5

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, horse-back, and wagons. Students will hear many instruments played along the Trail.

### **LEARNING GOALS:**

1. To remind students of the various ways people moved west.
2. To teach a variety of songs heard on these different vehicles.
3. To explore the variety of people who made these perilous journeys.

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

Ask if students have traveled across the United States. Discuss the importance of the West in American history and the ways people could have crossed the country 150 years ago. What conditions would have confronted an emigrant in 1846?

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

What music do students most enjoy? How much do they remember about Francis Parkman? How many states would one pass through on Parkman's trip today? Have students draw themselves into an Oregon Trail scene.

### **CURRICULUM LINKS:**

History and Social Science, English Language Arts, Music

## PRE-ACTIVITY: GOING WEST

### LEARNING GOAL:

To study the performance of Westward Movement and the Oregon Trail.

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Books and recordings about the Oregon Trail

### TIME:

one 45 minute class

### Step 1:

**Ask** students who have traveled across the country how they made the trip, how long it took, what they ate. Did anyone stop in the midwest, or did they travel straight through to the west coast?

### Step 2:

**Discuss** the pressures and conditions in Europe and the colonies/states that made people think of moving?

### Step 3:

**Look** at a topographic map of North America. What conditions would travelers in 1846 have had to endure? Which geographic features would have made travel difficult?

### Step 4:

**Ask** the students: How many different modes of travel would people have used to cross the continent in 1846? How fast did trains travel then? How fast did horses move? How fast did people walk? In each case, how long would the trips take? If they made it to California, would they have visited their homes back east very often?

### EXTENSIONS:

1) Ask the students how they would prepare for a trip that would last for 6 months. What would they pack?

2) If students were to travel cross-country, what route would they take? Why? If they could bring one modern invention, what would they take? Why?



## POST-ACTIVITY: PARKMAN'S JOURNEY

**LEARNING GOAL:**

To review aspects of the program.

**TIME:**

one 45 minute class

**TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:**

\*The book *American Folk Songs for Children* is an invaluable tool if you are considering singing in the classroom

**Step 1:**

**Discuss** the students' favorite songs from the performance. Did any of the instruments seem easy to play? Would they like to learn to play any of the more difficult ones?

**Step 2:**

**Discuss** the different kinds of travel mentioned in the performance. Who was Francis Parkman and where was he from? 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?

**Step 3:**

If students were to follow Parkman's route today, how many states would they cross? On a large map of Nebraska (or another midwestern/western state), how many rivers would Parkman have crossed? How many rivers are there between Boston and Albany? What is the highest point in Massachusetts?

**Step 4:**

**Have** students draw a picture of a wagon train, push boat, steamboat, or any other travel vehicle mentioned. and put themselves in the picture with Francis Parkman.

**EXTENSIONS:**

- 1) Compare the kinds of entertainment Parkman would have had on his journey with the kind of things students do on their trips.
- 2) Have students write about their most recent trip. Where did they go? what did they see?



## Jeff Davis: *The Oregon Trail*

Grade Levels: K-5

### 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:

blacksmith

epidemic

manifest destiny

cholera

ford

pinnacle springs

emigrant

landmark

pioneer

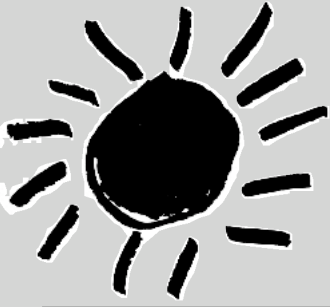
### ABOUT THE PERFORMER:

**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 has performed 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  
255 Elm Street, Suite 302, Somerville, MA, 02144  
(617) 629-YAMA (9262)  
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## 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.