Activity 8

Cattle Drive: A Livestock Game

Activity: Through a game (board) situation, students will identify regions of Alberta, some geographical features of our province and some of the beginnings of the livestock industry prior to 1905.

Curriculum Fit: Grade Four - Social Studies
• Topic A: Alberta - Its Geography and People
• Topic B: Alberta - Its People in History

Agriculture Concepts: Economic importance of agriculture

Cognitive Level: Application, Analysis

Materials Required: - game pieces (e.g. buttons)
- die
- game board
- game cards

Time Required: Two class periods.
Background — For the Teacher

From 1880 on, pasturing cattle on prairie grasslands was common in Canada. At times the cattle to be pastured had to be brought great distances so that they could graze on Alberta’s natural ranges. Cattle could be trailed to some areas of Alberta by Cattle Drives.

Cattle Drives were often long and special care had to be taken to maintain the health of all livestock. Water and good grass were of primary concern to the drivers and cowboys.

This game is a fairly reasonable re-creation of what a Cattle Drive might have entailed. Its intent is to provide students with some history of the agricultural industry in our province. It is best done as a separate lesson(s) as a cumulative activity towards the end of your unit.

Procedure

Preparation
1. Photocopy game cards (both sets) for setting up on the game board.
2. Set up the game and explain the rules to the students. Students can play to the “home plate” or take another trail back to the start.

Introduction
3. Introduce game and explain rules.
   a) Roll dice onto board.
   b) Choose a trail to take.
   c) Progress through the game with a combination of rolling the die and selection of cards based on the square landed on.
   d) The game can be extended by taking a trail back to the start.

Activity
4. Head ‘em up, ride ‘em out and start the game!

Conclusion
5. Conclude the activity by involving the students in a discussion on the following questions. Ask them what they have learned about the importance of livestock especially cattle.
   a) Describe what hazards and conditions the pioneers of the livestock industry in Alberta faced.
   b) Compare your trail with a road map. Are there similar roads or railroads on the road map of Alberta? Why might this be? Why do you think some trails are similar to highway routes?
   c) In your opinion, which trail is the best? Why?

Related Activities
1. List the bodies of water in each square of your trail. Include rivers in your labelling.
2. List the towns your trail passes by or comes in contact with.
3. Write a short story (fictional) of your cattle drive.
4. Students could map out the remainder of present day Alberta and do comparisons between the pre-1905 map and a present-day map.
5. Students list the rivers they crossed, find the origins of the rivers and their final destination.

Original lesson idea by John Hodgson
Modifications by AITC
Teacher Resource Sheet #1

Game Cards -- Cowboy Game Cards

The bridle breaks as you are crossing a river.
Move back one space.

The distance between watering places is underestimated.
Move back two spaces.

You draw for riding lead, away from the dust of the herd.
Move ahead two spaces.

Some cattle have pinkeye. You have to doctor the sick cattle.
Move back two spaces.

Your horse founders from too much feed.
Move back 2 spaces.

You draw the best cow horse for the day’s ride.
Move ahead three spaces.

Your crew has the best chuckwagon cook in the region.
Move ahead two spaces.

Taking up the rear of the herd is your position for the day - where the dust is.
Move back two spaces.

Your horse bucks when saddled in the morning.
Move back two spaces.
A clean swimming hole is discovered on a hot day. You get a chance for a swim.
Move ahead 1 space.

You look after some rank (wild) cattle.
Move back one space.

You discover an ancient Indian campsite.
Move forward 2 spaces.

You gather a wild steer no-one else could collect.
Move ahead two spaces.

The cattle are spooked by coyotes.
Move back three spaces.

The saddle maker repairs your saddle tack to better than before.
Move ahead two spaces.

Horses have wandered during the night. You have to gather them together.
Move back two spaces.

Your horse is lame.
Move back one space.

You draw the smoothest-riding horse for the day.
Move ahead three spaces.
Teacher Resource Sheet #3

Game Cards -- Rancher Game Cards

- A thunderstorm spooks and scatters the herd.
  Move back two spaces.

- A rookie cowboy puts his saddle on backwards and is thrown from the horse. This means a trip to the doctor.
  Move back one space.

- You stay in town a little longer than you anticipated.
  Move back one space.

- A slight gain in weight on cattle because of good grass.
  Move ahead one space.

- All cattle arrive at your destination.
  Move ahead three spaces.

- Your crew works and performs like a real team.
  Move ahead two spaces.

- You observe a herd of buffalo grazing peacefully.
  Move ahead two spaces.

- Town stores have all the supplies you need and some extra hands to help you on the Drive.
  Move forward one space.

- All of your crew arrives at your destination.
  Move forward three spaces.
Teacher Resource Sheet #4

Game Cards -- Rancher Game Cards

Your cook needs a stampede to get up in the morning.
Move back three spaces.

Chuckwagon runs out of grub.
Move back three spaces.

A wheel breaks on the chuckwagon.
Move back one space.

Cattle spook during the night.
Move back two spaces.

Two bulls fight each other. One is hurt and has to be treated.
Move back two spaces.

The cook turns out to be a graduate of Cordon’s Cooking School for Cowboys in France.
Move ahead three spaces.

Some cattle are lost.
Move back one space.

The cowboys are fighting.
Move back one space.

Your wrangler runs off.
Move back one space.
Horse thieves steal your best horse.
Move back two spaces.

The wrangler picks up some stray horses.
Move ahead one space.

Fresh meat for supper.
Move forward one space.

Cattle rustlers strike.
Move back three spaces.

A free load of firewood.
Move forward one space.

A better river crossing is discovered.
Move ahead two spaces.

An unexpected source of cool, clear water is discovered.
Move ahead three spaces.