

Women's Lib Hits the Plains!

Ty Bliss, Prairie Ridge Elementary, Longmont, Colorado

Jerilyn Kennoy, Hackberry Hill Elementary, Arvada, Colorado

OVERVIEW

Students will explore the typical work of the Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Ute women of Colorado before reservation life. They will use this information for a simulation activity.

STANDARDS

- Reading and Writing Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.
- Reading and Writing Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Reading and Writing Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, a listening, and viewing.
- Reading and Writing Standard 5: Students read to locate, select and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, references, and technology sources.
- History Standard 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.
- History Standard 3: Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time.
- History Standard 4: Students understand how science, technology, and economic activity have developed, changed, and affected societies throughout history.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Use primary source materials to identify and describe typical work of the Colorado Indian women before reservation life.
- Make use of primary source information of this topic to plan and carryout a simulated council meeting called to discuss women's roles in Indian village life.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- How did Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Ute women contribute to village life?
- How did the use of the horse affect women's work in the village?
(Teachers: Consider not only their ability to make use of horses to travel and /or carry heavy items, but also the fact that the use of horses meant many more buffalo hides to scrape and tan, larger tepees to construct, etc.)
- How might contact with white people have changed the way Colorado Indian women viewed their role?

MATERIALS

- Doing History/Keeping the Past CD_ROM disk or web site:
<http://hewit.unco.edu/dohist/>
- Colorado Indians/Reservation Life/Moving to Reservations/all photos and text;
- Photos and text from all themes of the Colorado Indians strand
- Primary Source Materials obtained from the Indians of Colorado Teacher's Guide or from the Doing History Archives
(<http://Hewit.unco.edu/dohist/archives/archives.htm>)
- Other resource materials the teacher has collected about women's work in the Colorado Indian villages.
- Copies of "My Inquiry Question Research"
- Chart paper for the simulation activity

PROCEDURE

1. Set the stage for research by telling students they will be viewing historical photos and written recollections of the work performed by Colorado Indian women before reservation life.
2. Review the strategies for using photos and primary source documents.
3. Allow time for students to view the entire Colorado Indian section of the web site or disk, if they haven't yet done so.
4. Discuss the inquiry questions and the format of "My Inquiry Question Research" paper. Hand out copies of the paper (one for each of the three questions).
5. Give students the opportunity to research answers to the inquiry questions using the web site or disk photos and reading the primary source documents on women's work. In addition to the section on women's work, encourage the students to make use of any of the photos and text available in the Colorado Indians theme. (See in particular picture 2 in Village Life) This would also be a good time to introduce other resource materials available.

6. Set the scene for the simulation activity by reading or posting the following information:

Occasionally, Indian women traveled with their husbands to towns, and even large cities. An example of this is Chipeta, wife of the Ute Chief, Ouray, who traveled to Washington D.C. Think about what Chipeta and others like her might have seen in "white man's towns and cities." What would they have noticed about the work of white women? How would they have compared it to their own work?

Simulation Activity:

Divide the class into two groups. One half of each group will role play the men of a Colorado Plains Indian village. The other half will role play the women of the village. Select one of the female students to role play "Little Bird", the wife of the chief of the village. She has just returned with her husband from a trip to Washington D.C. where she was able to observe white male and female roles in family life. Little Bird is now an advocate for some change in the workload of the women of the village. She, and the women and men of the village who agree with her, must think of reasons why some of the jobs women have traditionally done should be taken over by men, or the older male children. These men and women role-players should prepare to present their requests at a tribal council. Since women did not participate in tribal councils, this is an unusual request. How did Little Bird solve this problem? Those men and women who oppose change in the traditional roles of men and women in village life must also be prepared to defend their position with solid reasons why the the traditional ways are better for the safety and security of the people of the village.

Establish rules for the tribal council. For example:

How will you take turns speaking?

Will women speak for themselves, or will they have men speak for them?

Should there be a time limit to the council?

How will decisions be made?

7. Hold the simulated council meeting.
8. Chart reasons given by the opposing sides.
9. Record the final decision.

***Teacher Note: This simulation puts the village women and men in favor of changing women's roles into a 21st century scenario where we are very familiar with the freedom of women. Encourage students to thoughtfully consider how the Colorado Indians of more than a century ago might have reacted to such a request. Remind them to consider the honor that was given to chiefs and great warriors for the protection and provision they offered the village, and the security of knowing one's place in village life.

EXTENSIONS

1. Research Chipeta's trip to Washington D.C., and her return home. Was Chipeta changed by all that she must have experienced? Did change come to her family and village as a result of her trip east?
2. Research pioneer women's work in Colorado, and compare this with Colorado Indian women's work of the same period.

ASSESSMENT

- Observe the students' use of primary source documents and other resource materials to answer the inquiry questions.
- Evaluate the students' use of the information they've gathered on Colorado Indians women's work in the simulation activity.

My Inquiry Question Research*

Name:	Topic:
Inquiry Question:	
What I already know:	
Resource 1:	What I found out:
Resource 2:	What I found out:
Resource 3:	What I found out:
Interesting related facts:	
Key words:	
My answer to the inquiry question:	

* Format adapted from Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy (April, 1996).