

The American connection

Unit 2

The Journey



TEACHER'S BOOK

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Unit 2: The Journey

TEACHER NOTES

This unit of work on the Journey to America gives pupils the opportunity to:

- Identify the ports from which the emigrants left Ireland
- Read some of the advertisements which attracted the emigrants to a new life across the ocean
- Design a newspaper advertisement
- Learn about life aboard ship for the emigrants
- Compile a food diary
- Take part in a group discussion
- Use their imagination to write a diary entry
- Write a letter from the New World
- Create a TV documentary
- Compose a song
- Plan a trip to America
- Reflect on their own work

KEY STAGE 3 CURRICULUM

The activities in this unit would fit into work on aspects of the General Learning Areas of English including Media Education and Drama; Environment and Society including Geography and History and also link into aspects of Citizenship.

The unit provides opportunities to teach, practise and assess some of the following skills and capabilities:

- Critical and Creative Thinking Skills—creativity; managing information; problem solving/decision making
- Personal and Interpersonal Skills—self management, working with others
- Communication
- ICT

TEACHER NOTES

Aim and Objectives of the NI Curriculum

Aim

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout life.

Curriculum Objectives

The Northern Ireland Curriculum should provide learning opportunities for each young person to develop as:

1. An individual
2. A contributor to society; and
3. A contributor to the economy and the environment

Work in this unit 'The Journey' provides opportunities for pupils to :

As an individual

- Be aware of their creative potential (personal understanding)
- Respect and cooperate with others (mutual understanding)
- Be reliable and committed to tasks (moral character)

As a contributor to society

- Recognise the interdependence of people (citizenship)
- Negotiate and compromise (citizenship)
- Recognise the richness and diversity of cultural influences in contemporary society (cultural understanding)
- Be critically aware of the range of print sound, moving image and graphic media (media awareness)

Learning Experiences

- Challenging and engaging
- Linked to other curriculum areas
- Media rich
- Skills integrated
- Active and hands on
- Offers choice
- Varied to suit learning styles
- On-going reflection



BACKGROUND NOTES

Unit 2: The Journey

The Scots had come to Ulster to better themselves economically, and to gain comparative freedom of worship which existed in Ulster as opposed to 17th century Scotland. However, religious restrictions were imposed in Ireland in 1703, so that once again they faced persecution as they had in Scotland in the previous century.

A large number of Scots had arrived in Ulster in the 1690's and had taken up either 21 year or 31 year leases. These had been offered at attractive rates by the landlords to encourage improvements on their estates. When these original leases expired, the landlords either raised the rents exorbitantly (rent racking), or put the leases up for auction, causing many to move off the land and begin to think about moving on westwards to America. Nearly 1700 leases for 21 years terminated in 1717 and it is not surprising therefore that in that same year, more than 5000 Ulstermen left for America. Five great periods of migration to the American Colonies followed - in 1717/8; 1725-29; 1740/1; 1754/5; and 1771-75. All these dates coincided with terminations of leases. In the period 1714-1720 alone, some 55 ships full of immigrants sailed from Ireland to ports in New England and between 1717 and 1776, over 200,000 Ulster-Scots made the journey. By the time of the first census of the United States, in 1790, the Scots-Irish were the second largest nationality group (the English were the largest).

Many of the emigrant ships were just refitted cargo ships. Ship owners and captains quickly realised the profits to be made in transporting people rather than cargo. Often ships would bring in a cargo of timber or flax seed from America and return to the colonies filled with human cargo instead. These makeshift passenger ships were very uncomfortable. For example, one ship - the William - had head room of only four feet nine inches below decks. In its advertisement it described itself as "roomy" which gives some indication of the conditions in which many travelled.

People - men, women and children, lived, slept and ate in these cramped conditions. Sanitary conditions were basic so disease was rife. Smallpox and cholera were ever-present dangers. Sleeping arrangements were cramped and the dying could be lying alongside a mother giving birth.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Unit 2: The Journey

INDENTURE

The term 'indentured' comes from the medieval English practice "indenture of retainer". This was a contract written in duplicate on the same sheet of paper with the copies separated by cutting along a jagged (i.e. toothed, hence indenture) line so that the teeth of the two parts could be fitted together to prove the authenticity of the document.

The term redemptioner (coming from the theological concept of redemption or buying back) was used to refer to an immigrant, usually in the 18th and 19th centuries who had gained passage to America by selling themselves as an indentured servant.

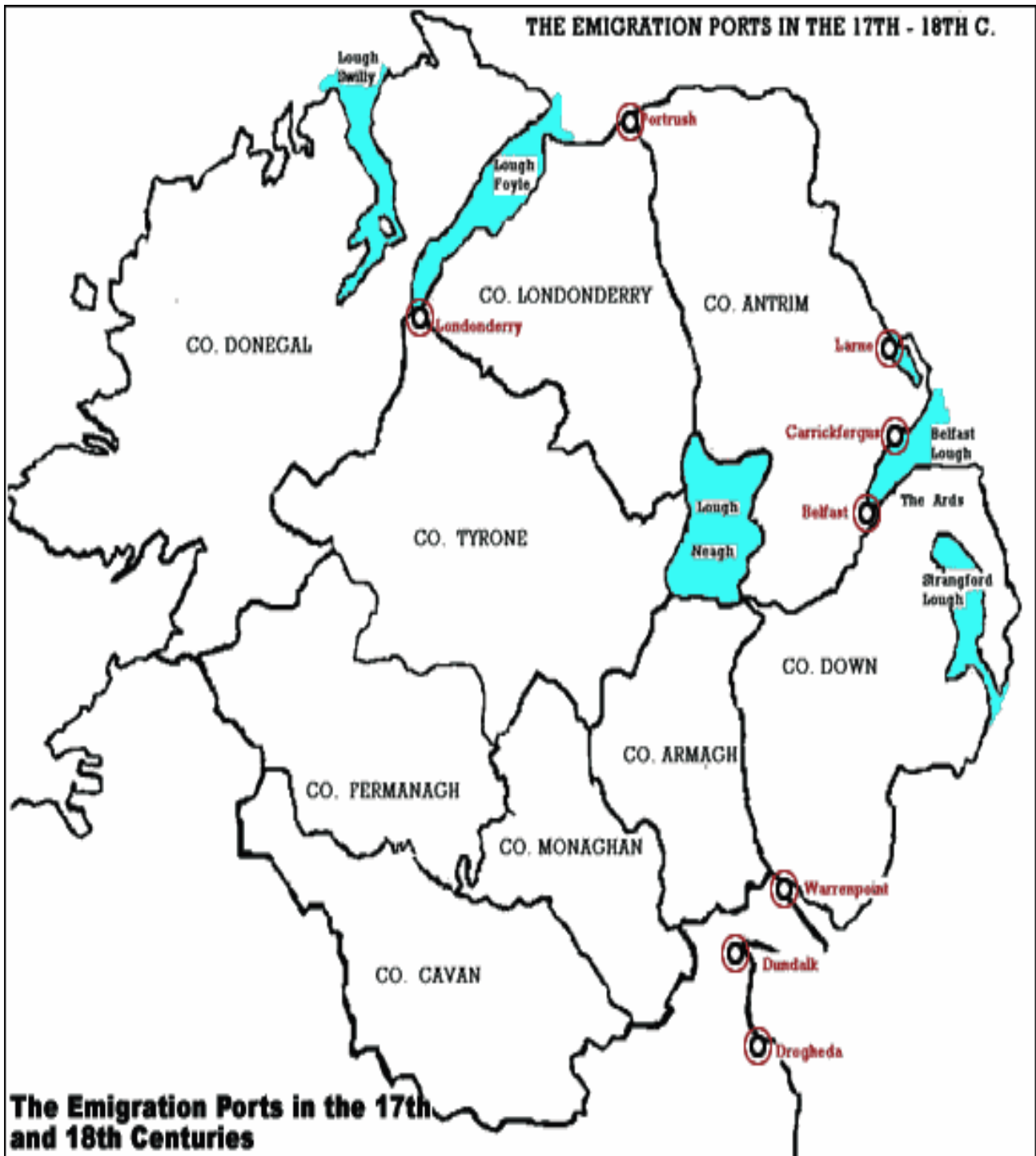
For many living in poverty on the land in Ulster or facing persecution for their Presbyterian (and also Catholic) faith, the lure of America was strong. They heard stories of freedom and prosperity in this new land; a land of opportunities. But how to get there? That was the difficulty. If you didn't have enough to feed yourself how could you pay for the passage across the Atlantic? Only those better-off tenant farmers could raise enough money to pay the cost of the journey and to start themselves off in a new country.

For the rest, the answer was to travel as indentured servants. In return for the promise to work for a period of years for no pay (just clothing, room and board) on arrival, they were permitted to travel free. This arrangement was usually made with the ship's captain who would then 'sell' the servant to the highest bidder on the quayside in America. Regular notices would appear in the Philadelphia newspapers (a favourite port for ships from Ulster) advertising the sale of newly-arrived servants : "Just imported and to be sold, Irish servants, men and women of good trades from the North of Ireland".

Throughout much of the 17th and 18th centuries, this practice of "indenturing servants" was a means of providing cheap labour for the settlers who bought the passengers at auction in the port cities. They became the property of their master for a specified term, lasting from five to fourteen years, after which they gained their freedom.

It was not, however, a form of slavery. Individuals entered into their contracts voluntarily, and they did have some legal rights: they could own property, and turn to the courts for protection against abusive masters. On the other hand, they could not marry without their master's consent, and they had little control over their working conditions and living standards. Terms varied substantially, from four years for skilled adults to a decade or more for unskilled minors. And all could find their terms extended if they ran away or became pregnant. Servants could be sold without their consent.

Emigration Ports From Ulster



Ship's Rules

- *No smoking between decks (any tobacco found was confiscated until the ship reached port)*
- *No alcohol or gunpowder to be carried*
- *Church services every Sunday which ALL must attend*
- *All passengers to be up by 7am*
- *Breakfast at 8-9 am; dinner 1pm and supper 6pm*
- *Beds must be rolled up during the day*
- *Decks to be swept (including under bunks!) before breakfast*
- *All fires out by 7pm*
- *ALL passengers in their berths by 10pm*
- *A safety lamp to be left lit all night at the main hatchway*
- *No naked lights at any time*
- *Beds to be aired on deck at least twice a week*
- *Cooking utensils must be cleaned daily*

[These are only part of the rules. Only some of the passengers could read anyway. Anyone breaking rules could be punished by the captain including being flogged.]

SHIP'S RULES ORAL

LETTER FROM THE NEW WORLD

TO THE NEW WORLD TASK

TRIP TO AMERICA TASK