Fourth Grade Lesson Plans on the Ludlow Massacre

BY

Mike Sciortino (with revisions from Dean Saitta)

FOR

Dean Saitta
Department of Anthropology
Denver University

CLASS

Work and Culture in the Southern Colorado Coal Fields June 22-27 Trinidad State Junior College

EXPLANATION

The following lessons on Ludlow are designed for a fourth grade class and are arranged in a certain way. However, the teacher should change content and order if they feel it is necessary or if they feel that their students will learn more and be more productive if some things are done differently. The activities can also be done by individuals, in pairs, or in groups.

LESSON ONE

OBJECTIVE: To find out what life was really like in the West when it was being settled.

- 1. Write the words "myth" and "reality" on the board.
 - a. discuss students perceptions of how pioneers lived and traveled.
- b. present Turners Frontier Hypothesis: West as an open land offering freedom and opportunity; devoid of oppression and class struggle.
 - c. discuss students perceptions of how they think cowboys lived.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- 1. Have students make a plan on what they would need to take out West if they were a pioneer. Then draw a picture of what they would look like and write a short story of what their adventure would be like.
 - 2. Write and draw a cartoon strip on what life would be like as a cowboy.

COMPARE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS WITH REAL HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF FRONTIER LIFE; REVISIT TURNER'S FRONTIER HYPOTHESIS WITH THESE HISTORICAL FACTS IN MIND

OBJECTIVE: To find out how Colorado was first settled and to find out how Trinidad became a town.

- 1. Discuss mountain men and why they came and explored Colorado
 - a. discuss the Louisiana Purchase
 - b. Stephen Long
 - c. Zebulon Pike
 - d. Kit Carson
- 2. How Trinidad started
 - a. Santa Fe Trail and Raton Pass
 - b. Felipe Baca and ranching
 - c. Trains

- 1. Have students come up with their own questions and quiz each other.
- 2. Research and write a report on one of the famous men mentioned.

OBJECTIVE: Discuss how coal mining started around Trinidad and what life was like in the coal towns.

- 1. General Palmer
 - a. built railroad from Denver to Trinidad.
 - b. built railroads outside of towns for money and control.
 - c. began CFI in Pueblo.
 - d. started coal mines around Trinidad to fuel CFandI.
- 2. Mines around Trinidad
 - a. examples- Cokedale, Segundo, Tercio, Sopris, etc.
 - b. were usually in remote places
- 3. How did people live back then?
 - a. How did they eat, sleep, etc.
- 4. How is that different from how students live today?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

1. Have students list at least 8 ways that they could live and entertain themselves without T.V., radios, boomboxes, etc.

OBJECTIVE: Discuss what an immigrant is; gain some understanding of their dilemmas.

- 1. Write the word "immigrant" on board and discuss what it means.
- 2. What problems and challenges were faced by immigrants of 100 years ago?
 - a. had to come to new country
 - b. didn't understand language or customs
 - c. had to look for a job
 - d. had to face discrimination
- 3. Discuss differences between the agrarian, farming culture from which most of the immigrants came to the industrial, factory cultures in which they had to work in the U.S.
- 4. Discuss current immigrants and the problems and challenges they face. How are their lives similar to and different from those faced by their ancestors?

- 1. Have students draw a picture of what a new kid might look like on the playground and how they might help that new student.
- 2. Have students look through the newspaper and bring in articles about current immigrants to discuss with the class.
- 3. Have students write a short story about what their life might be like if they were an immigrant.

LESSON FIVE

OBJECTIVE: The students will find out what daily life was like for miners

- 1. Many immigrants of the past had to find jobs where they could
 - a. many of those jobs were in mines or factories where not much skill was needed.
 - b. examples of other areas where immigrants could mine are Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Northern and Southern Colorado
- 2. Coal towns were often in remote places where the mining company owned everything
 - a. company houses
 - b. how mining towns were set up
 - c. company store and scrip
 - d. miners had to pay for most of their own equipment
 - e. harassment by company people
 - 3. Work conditions inside the coal mines
 - a. size of tunnel
 - b. equipment miners carried
 - c. donkey and cart
 - d. extra work miners had to do
 - 4. Show pictures of miners
 - 5. Discuss how the miners families might have felt

- 1. Discuss song "Sixteen Tons" and discuss what it means; Discuss song "Don't Go Down In The Mine Dad" and what it means
 - 2. (some sort of activity involving company scrip?)
 - 3. Have students start planning a diorama of what work was like in a mine

OBJECTIVE: To understand the concept of Union.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- 1. Ask students to respond to the following questions, and have them share their answers:
 - a. What do you think Labor Day commemorates?
 - b. What does the concept of "Union" mean?
 - c. Why would an employee want to join a union? Why would some employers discourage their employees from joining a union?
- 2. Ask students to interview parents, grandparents, and other adults about changes in the world of work that they have seen in their lifetimes, and their thoughts about the role of unions in these changes.
- 3. Have students interview people employed in the human resources departments of local businesses and companies about the benefits that are guaranteed to employees in the workplace. Compare the benefits available across different types of jobs (agricultural, industrial, professional). Why might differences exist?
- 4. Examine newspaper accounts of a current labor issue (e.g., janitors in Denver, baseball umpires, teacher strikes, workers in Third World sweat shops) and discuss the issues at stake from the perspectives of employers and employees.
- 5. Analyze and discuss the US Secretary of Labor's Labor Day message. What are the issues facing labor today, in this view?

PROVIDE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE UNION MOVEMENT: IMPORTANT EVENTS, DIFFERENT KINDS OF UNIONS, UNION STRATEGIES AND TACTICS, "NEW DEAL" LEGISLATION, ETC.

OBJECTIVE: to begin exploring why the Ludlow Massacre and Coal Field War happened

- 1. Review miner's lives—provide some background on what daily life and work schedule was like in Southern Colorado
 - 2. Talk about possible courses of action for miners.

- 1. Have students get into groups (these could be assigned different ethnic identities) and draw up a list of demands based on their understanding of everyday life and work conditions—what demands would they prioritize and why?
 - 2. Have groups compare their lists of demands and achieve some consensus.
 - 3. Compare class lists with ACTUAL MINERS DEMANDS
 - a. The CF and I will recognize the Union.
 - b. The Company will pay an extra 10% in wages per ton of coal.
 - c. The miners and coke oven operators will only have an 8 hour work day.
 - d. Pay for all "dead" work (shoring up of mine shafts for safety).
 - e. The checkweighmen will be agreed to by the miners.
 - f. The miners will be able to choose any boardinghouse, physician, etc., that they want.
 - g. The enforcement of Colorado mining laws regulating safety conditions, and abolition of the company guard system.
 - 4. Discuss differences between the student's list and the miner's list, and the significance of any differences.

OBJECTIVE: To discuss the events of Ludlow and the subsequent 10 days war.

- 1. Going on strike
 - a. Had to leave company towns
 - b. had to get to Ludlow and live there when weather was bad
- 2. Setting up of tent colony
 - a. Union provided tents and coffee when miners arrived
 - b. strike fund
- 3. The Rockefellers
 - a. how miners viewed them
- 4. Calling in of National Guard
 - a. harassment
 - b. limiting movement in and out of Ludlow
 - c. Use of the "Death Special"
 - d. General Chase
 - e. Lieutenant Linderfelt
- 5. Mother Jones's arrest and the march in Trinidad to protest it
 - a. Why were only women and children sent?
 - b. What happened?
 - 1. the soldiers charge the protestors
- 6. Day of the Massacre
 - a. ultimatum to Louis Tikas from National Guard
 - b. warning bombs
 - c. machine guns on Watertank Hill
 - d. reactions of miners and families
 - 1. hiding in dirt cellars
 - 2. men gathering guns
 - e. Miners and families flee to Black Hills
 - f. Guards setting camp on fire
 - g. 11 women and children dying in cellar
 - h. Louis Tikas's death
- 7. 10 Days War, and President Wilson's intervention

- 1. Have students view a movie like "Matewan" and discuss the portrayal of people (miners, mine operators, strikebreakers) and events. Do these portrayals seem accurate based on what you know of Southern Colorado mining history?
- 2. Compare and contrast portrayals of different occupations and workers in American art from the early 1800s to today.

OBJECTIVE: To understand Ludlow's Legacy

- 1. Have students read some testimonies before the Colorado Courts and Industrial Relations Committee, with the question "Who is to blame?" in mind. Have them compare their answers.
- 2. Discuss the "Colorado Industrial Plan" establishing company unions and compare the company union idea with other union ideals.