

Mapping Migration: The Mississippi Delta & Me

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Time Frame—3-4; 50 min. periods

Grades 8-9

Objective:

- Students will be able to explain the importance of geography immigration to the United States and migration within the United States.
- Students will identify push and pull factors of immigration to the Mississippi Delta using primary source oral histories.
- Students will be able to describe the importance of; and the effect of *Place* on people's perception of immigrants using oral history.

Background information:

As the Mississippi Delta flourished in the late 1800s/early 1900s immigrants were drawn to the rich economic opportunities available to them in the region. Immigrant groups in the area filled the economic needs of the region: Chinese grocers, Jewish Merchants, Italian farmers, Syrian hardware stores. Immigrant groups tried to assimilate while maintaining their cultural identities and their separateness in the Delta. These groups added to the cultural diversity and rich heritage of the Delta. The geography of the land also shaped these immigrants and their experiences in America.

Activity:

Part I: How did you get where you are?: (1-2 class periods)

Students will create a map to explore their family's immigration/migration story.

Materials: Blank Map <http://alliance.la.asu.edu/maps/world-at.pdf> (Arizona Geographic Alliance: Maps tab)

Colored Pencils;

NOTE—Create an example map to illustrate this concept for yourself and share with the class before/while explaining the activity.

IN CLASS:

1. Hand-out blank map of the world.
2. Use one color for themselves, a different color for their parents, and a third color for grandparents.
3. Tell students to plot where they were born and where they are NOW on the map in one color. Draw an arrow from where they were born to where they are NOW.

AT HOME: Ask your parents/grandparents/guardian.

1. Where were (both) of your parents were born? (mark in another color)
2. Where were (both) of your grandparents born? (mark in a different color)

Then, starting with the furthest generation, draw with an arrow indicating where they migrated. Mark each city/town that they moved to on their migration map.

3. All their arrows should end up where the student is NOW.
4. On the bottom of the map; share one Push factor/Pull factor for your family's migration story and explain.

Have students share maps with the class

Discuss with the class reasons for immigrating/migrating. List on the board as students share push/pull factors.

Part II: Examining Primary Sources: (1-2 class periods)

Students will read primary source *Growing up Chinese in Mississippi in Greenville, Mississippi* by Frieda Seu Quon

Teacher will give some background information about the history/culture of the Mississippi Delta to aid student comprehension.

Discussion Questions:

1. Underline and Define at least 5 key vocabulary words that will enhance your understanding of the reading.
2. What were the push and/or pull factors that brought Frieda Seu Quon's family to the USA and to the Mississippi Delta.
3. Choose at least one event that you think is important to understanding Frieda Seu Quon's immigration story and explain why you chose this event.

Discuss the reading & the questions with the class.

1. How does Frieda's story compare with your own family's immigration/migration story?
2. What are the similarities/differences?

Part III—How does Place effect people's perceptions?

Place refers to both the human and physical characteristics of the location.

- Have the students list physical characteristics of the Mississippi Delta:
 - Mississippi River
 - Forests
 - Rich soil
 - Heat/humidity

- Rainy climate/floods
- Less than 1,000 ft. some of MS is below 500ft
- Have students list human characteristics of the Delta
 - Agriculture, cotton, soybeans, corn, rice, wheat
 - Levees
 - Music/blues
 - Religions
 - Racism

Make a T chart comparing the effects of Place.

Have students identify characteristics of place “Where they are NOW.” (Physical and Human) on one side

Have students identify characteristics of place in the reading “*Growing up Chinese in Greenville, Mississippi*” on the other side

Discussion Question: Does Place have an effect on people’s perceptions of immigrants in these stories?

Part IV: Conclusion/Assessment—Oral Histories.

Students will interview a family member/friend/relative/community member about their immigration or migration story.

1. 5-W questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How?
2. Experiences before moving
3. Experiences in their new place
4. Add follow up questions that you asked for your interview.
5. Write a transcript or a story of your oral history. (you may make an audio CD of your interview)
6. Share with the class

Additional Activities:

Using the information that you gathered from your oral history create an artifact that represents the immigration/migration story.

Identity Box—on the inside create a collage, use symbols to explain/express their pre-migration place, on the outside of the box represent their experiences in the new place.

Open to student interpretation