

Theme 1: Frontier Iowa in 1851

Learning Goals:

- Students will understand that the Iowa frontier moved progressively from the southeast region to the northwest region of the state over a period of approximately 40 years (1833-1870).
- Students will understand that the frontier period of Iowa history closed by 1870.
- Students will understand that the process of surveying Iowa and forming townships was completed in 1851.

Iowa History Content Benchmarks:

2. Native Americans
 - a. The Federal government tried to control American Indians through treaties and forced land sales. As a result, tribes frequently moved into and out of Iowa.
3. European Contacts
 - b. The land area of present-day Iowa became part of the U.S. in 1803 with the Louisiana Purchase.
 - d. Iowa became part of the United States in an orderly process provided by the Federal government, moving through district and territory status to full statehood in 1846.
4. Pioneer Life on the Prairie
 - a. Iowa land was surveyed by the government and sold at auctions held by government land officers.
5. Providing a Government
 - a. A region cannot arbitrarily become a state on its own. It must first be a district and a territory before it becomes a state.
 - b. Iowa's territorial and state capitals were moved from Burlington to Iowa City to Des Moines.
 - c. Iowa became a state on December 28, 1846.
 - d. As Iowa's population grew, counties were set up to provide for local government.

Materials:

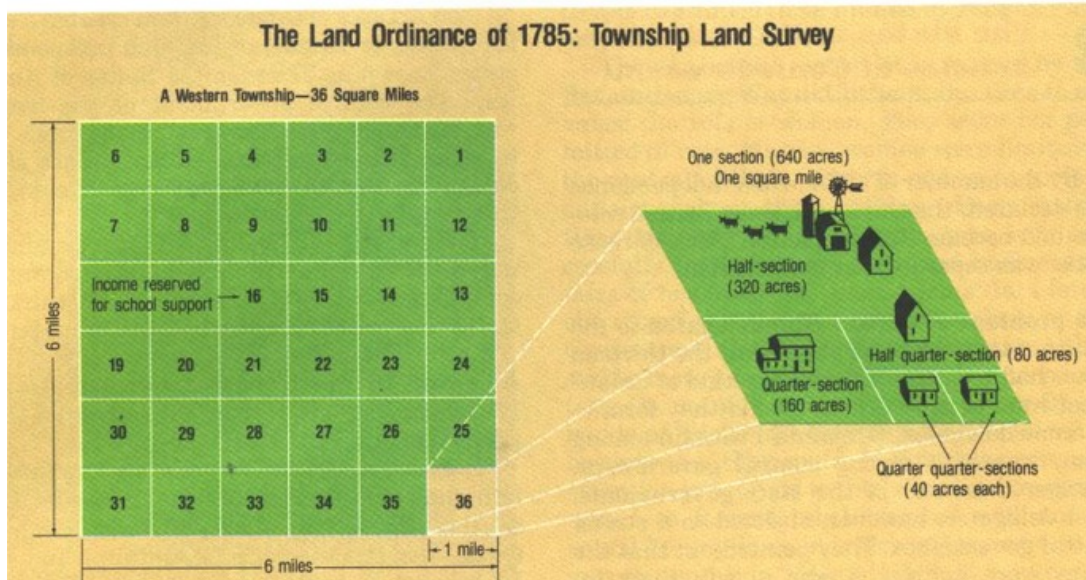
- The following lesson procedures are designed to be implemented in a computer lab or in the single-computer classroom using an LCD panel. If none of these resources are available, the teacher may wish to create transparencies and hard copies of the lesson materials and adapt the procedures to the available environment.
- Iowa road maps for every two students

Activities:

1. Direct students to look at the map of Iowa's Native Vegetation found in the Iowa Maps section of the Explorations in Iowa History Project site.
<http://fp.uni.edu/iowahist/Site%20Map/sitemap.htm>

2. Then direct students to look at a map of Iowa Counties found in the Iowa Maps section of the Explorations in Iowa History Project site.
<http://fp.uni.edu/iowahist/Site%20Map/sitemap.htm>
3. **Discussion question: How did Iowa get from a native prairie and woodland environment to a fully mapped region?** (Iowa became part of the United States in 1803 with the Louisiana Purchase. In 1834 it became part of the Michigan Territory, in 1836 part of the Wisconsin Territory, and in 1838 part of the Iowa Territory. Iowa became a state on December 28, 1846. But much of the land in western Iowa had still not been surveyed completely. Counties and townships were not fully established until 1851.)
4. In order for students to recognize that the pioneer settlement of Iowa was a gradual process that began in 1833 and continued through 1870, have them look at the following maps in the Iowa Maps section of the Explorations in Iowa History Project site. <http://fp.uni.edu/iowahist/Site%20Map/sitemap.htm>
 - Map: United States in 1832
 - **Discussion Question: How was present-day Iowa identified on this map?** (As Unorganized Territory.)
 - Map: Indian Land Cessions
 - Map: Iowa Territory 1842 Open for Settlement
 - Map: Five Frontiers of the Iowa Pioneers
 - County Map of the State of Iowa 1870
 - **Discussion Question: What do these maps show about pioneer settlement of Iowa.**
 - Students should recognize that pioneer settlement was a gradual process that moved in an east to west direction across the state between 1833 and the close of the frontier period in 1870.
 - By looking at the 1870 county map of Iowa students should also observe that the NW area of the state was much less populated than the SE area of the state. Why?
 - **Discussion Question: Have students look at the map Iowa Territory 1842 Open for Settlement and the County map of Iowa. What do they observe about the shape of the state?** (The Iowa border in the NW corner of the state is significantly different from one map to the other.) **How can that be explained?** (Because the NW corner of the state was settled later than the SE section of the state, surveying of the NW corner was less accurate in 1842.)
5. With the Land Ordinance of 1785, the federal government established a means by which lands to the west of the original 13 colonies would be divided and sold to settlers. As Indians relinquished lands in the Midwest, government surveyors were to divide the territory into individual townships. Each township was to be square. Each side of the square was to be six miles in length, and the completed square would include a total of thirty-six square miles of territory. The town would then be divided

into one-square mile sections, with each section encompassing 640 acres. Each section received its own number. Section sixteen was set aside for a public school.



From [The Summit Country Day School](http://www.summitcountryday.com), Cincinnati OH

6. Direct students to go to page 8 of the 1870 Iowa State Almanac found in the Frontier Life in Iowa section of the Explorations in Iowa History Project 1870 Iowa State Almanac <http://fp.uni.edu/iowahist/Site%20Map/sitemap.htm> Read the information about Iowa's township divisions. Students should understand that:
 - The number of townships in a county varied. By looking carefully at the map Iowa Territory 1842 Open for Settlement, students will observe that many counties were composed of 16 or 20 townships (4X4 or 4X5).
 - Each township measured 6 miles by 6 miles or 36 square miles or 36 sections.
 - A section of land is a one-mile square. Students may have observed that in rural areas throughout the state, roads have been built on many of these section lines.
 - When Iowa's land was first sold by the government pioneer farmers purchased smaller tracts of land than present day farmers work. Pioneer farms were often 80 acres in size and cost \$1.25 per acre. **Problem to Solve: If the original pioneer farms were 80 acres each, how many pioneer families could live in one section? (Eight) How much would 80 acres of land cost the pioneer farmer? (\$100)**

7. Have students go to J.F. Abraham's 1851 Township Map of Iowa found in the Iowa Maps section of the Explorations in Iowa History Project site. <http://fp.uni.edu/iowahist/Site%20Map/sitemap.htm> This map was printed in 1851 after Iowa had been surveyed and divided into counties with designated townships within each county.

8. Have students open the 1851 map in PDF format and assign one of the 10 map sections to pairs of students. Distribute copies of current road maps of Iowa. Have

students compare sections of the state. **Discussion Questions: What has changed? What has not changed?**

9. Have students look at tile 1, the NW corner of the state. In the margin of the map the following information can be found:

CENSUS RETURNS OF THE PRINCIPAL CITIES OF IOWA For 1850	
Burlington	—5,129
Dubuque	—4,071
Muscatine	—2,534
Keokuk	—2,478
Fort Madison	—1,512
Iowa City	—1,250
Fairfield	—1,200
Davenport	—2,200

10. Have students identify the locations of these “principal cities” of 1850 on their Iowa road map. **Discussion Questions: What part of the state are these cities found? Why would they be the principal cities of Iowa in 1850? Would they be considered our principal cities today? What has changed? What is the relationship of these cities to Iowa’s rivers?** (These cities are all in the east. Settlement was in an east to west direction and in 1850 when this data was collected, the state of Iowa was much more populous in the east than in the western part of the state. Today’s major cities are more evenly distributed around the state even though the eastern half of the state is more populous than the western sections even today. The relationship between major cities and the location of rivers persists today.)
11. Conclude the lesson by looking at the series of United States maps for 1832, 1859, and 1870. **Discussion Question: How was the development of the United States similar and how was it different from that of Iowa?** (Iowa developed in an east to west direction just as the nation did. Iowa’s development was a small part of a larger progression of national events where Indian lands were progressively annexed as the swelling population of eastern states pushed westward throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.)