Episode 3: Building Futures

Lesson Title: The Seven Industries That Built Colorado

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Episode Description:

Building Futures: Entrepreneurship & Identity traces the entrepreneurial spirit of Coloradans who forged economic pathways despite discrimination, limited capital, and systemic barriers. These stories reveal how enterprise, labor, and innovation built communities and created lasting cultural legacies.

Throughout the episode, children's voices—including students from immigrant families, Indigenous, Black, Latino, and neurodivergent youth—reflect on work and identity, connecting historical entrepreneurship to modern opportunities. Utilizing archival materials and visual sequences, Episode 3 emphasizes that Colorado's economic development has always been driven by diverse individuals who carved opportunity from challenge.

Episode Inquiry Questions:

1. How did early entrepreneurship in Colorado reflect the diverse backgrounds of the Indigenous Peoples and others who come to Colorado?
2. What cultural factors and systemic barriers influenced the development of the entrepreneurial spirit in Colorado communities?

Lesson Description:

In this lesson, 4th-grade students explore the seven key industries that shaped Colorado's development and statehood. Through an inquiry-based "Gallery Walk" and research activities, students investigate the historical and cultural significance of these industries, connecting them to the broader theme of entrepreneurship and economic growth. The lesson emphasizes critical thinking and collaboration

as students analyze historical sources, consider systemic factors, and reflect on the evolution of labor and industry in Colorado from the past to the present.

Grade Level/Time Needed:

4th Grade/70-90 Minutes (Can be split into two if needed).

Lesson Inquiry Question:

1. What industries drove Colorado's economic development in the lead-up to statehood?

Supporting Questions:

1. Who did these industries impact?
2. Have these industries sustained time and are part of Colorado's industries today?
3. Have any of these industries changed over time?
4. Are any of these industries produced the same as they were before?

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify at least seven industries that shaped Colorado's economy before statehood.
2. Explain how growth in a specific industry attracted population and settlement to the Colorado Territory.
3. Connect at least one industry to its impact on a specific community or group of people in Colorado's history.

Background Knowledge / Contextual Paragraph for Teachers:

Need to know what the seven industries are and why they are important. Colorado has a deep history with seven major industries that shaped its culture and economy. All information below is available and resourced for this lesson from the Steamboat Spring History Museum unless otherwise indicated.

1. Millinery & Dressmaking
    a. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, millinery (hat-making) and dressmaking flourished in Denver and other growing towns. With the

influx of miners, railroad workers, and settlers, demand for tailored clothing and fashionable hats surged. Local artisans crafted everything from practical miners' caps to elegant ladies' hats, reflecting both utility and style. These trades supported women's economic independence and became part of Colorado's cultural fabric. Kate Ferretti was a well-known hat maker in Denver in the early 20th century. She spent years designing hats at home before officially establishing a storefront in the Little Italy neighborhood of northwest Denver. In 1938 she operated her business at 3736 Tejon Street. She was the leading milliner for Denver's high society.

2. Mining
    a. The 1859 Pikes Peak Gold Rush launched Colorado's mining industry, drawing thousands of prospectors and entrepreneurs. Gold, silver, lead, zinc, and later molybdenum became the state's wealth. Mining towns like Denver, Leadville, and Central City grew rapidly, fostering blacksmith shops, foundries, and general stores. The Denver Mint was established to meet the demand for coinage, and mining supported not only wealth but also infrastructure and population growth. Source: History Colorado.
3. Ice
    a. Before refrigeration, ice harvesting was vital. In the late 1800s, Colorado's abundant mountain snowpack allowed for large-scale ice harvesting. Ice houses and delivery services kept food fresh in Denver and other cities, supporting both urban and rural communities. This industry bridged the gap between Colorado's natural resources and the needs of a growing population.
4. Flour Mills
    a. With the expansion of agriculture, flour milling became essential. Mills processed wheat and other grains into flour for bread, a staple of the diet. Early mills were powered by water from rivers, later by steam and electricity. Flour mills not only fed the population but also tied farmers to urban markets, strengthening the agricultural economy.

5. Saddlery & Spurs
    a. Colorado's rugged terrain and ranching culture made saddlery a vital industry. From the 1800s onward, craftsmen produced saddles, spurs, and other riding gear for cowboys, ranchers, and miners. These items were both functional and symbolic of the state's frontier spirit, and the trade supported local artisans and transportation networks.
6. Sugar Beets
    a. In the early 20th century, sugar beets transformed Colorado's plains into a patchwork of prosperity, drawing immigrant families whose labor turned the crop into the state's first great agricultural fortune. Known as "white gold," the beets fueled bustling factories, built towns, and wove together communities from many cultures. Though their dominance has faded, the legacy of sugar beets still lingers in the soil, the stories, and the enduring spirit of those who worked the fields.

Building Background Knowledge for the Student/ Contextual paragraph

- Discuss the word job with the students. What does job mean? Ask if they know what jobs their grandparents have or had? What jobs do their parents have?
- Ask them questions about the major industries that are around your specific city or town to make connections of why the city or town is still able to provide jobs or have people live around there.
- Have the students brainstorm ideas of jobs and work that they think were needed and done over 150 years ago, before Colorado became a state.

Lesson Materials Needed:

1. Order History Take Out from History Colorado, if you have funds for this or live close to one of the museums that you can pick up a kit, Western Work: Colorado Industries of the Past. [History Take Out | History Colorado]
2. If you are unable to order the kit, use the website as a source.
3. Print class set of Industry Note catcher.

4. Print one set of each industry pictures to be displayed for gallery walk.
5. Computers and internet access to research.

Lesson Instruction:

Gallery Walk Experience:

1. Have the word INDUSTRY on the board. Do not tell the students yet what this word means.
2. Have either the 7 industry artifacts or the pictures of the 7 industries set up in 7 areas/tables in your room for the students to be able to do a galley walk.
3. Hand out to students the note catcher with INDUSTRY on the top and then Know and Wonder on each half of the paper. Inform the students that they are to write and/or draw anything they know about each table they visit in the room.
4. Remind the students that they may pick up the pictures or artifacts, however, students should not speak to each other at this time. They need to draw or write on their industry note catcher if they Know or Wonder about things as they move along the Gallery Walk.

Gallery Walk Discussion: 20 minutes

1. Have the students sit at the tables with the industries and have a table discussion amongst themselves. Provide them with these questions.
    - Is this an industry that is still being used today?
    - What comes out of this industry's process?
    - Can you tell what industry this is? What specific clues led you to that answer?
2. After the table talks, have the groups share what they think their table industry is and see if any student or group starts to make connections with the pictures and items and the word job and industry.
3. Give each industry their proper name for the students to see and hear what they are. The industries are Saddles & Spurs, Sugar Beets, Millinery & Dressmaking, Mining, Ice, and Flour Mills.
    a. Here are questions to ask or think about to help understand each industry.

- Flour Mills: What was different about the flour mill building? Why would those men be standing on the second floor, are they waiting for anything? What and why?
- Mining: What was the source of light for the men in the picture? Why are they not using flashlights or spotlights?
- Saddlery & Spurs: Why was saddlery and spurs an important industry to the growth of Colorado?
- Ice: What challenges did workers face when cutting and delivering ice in Colorado? Think about seasons and where it gets the coldest in our state.
- Millinery and Dressmaking: Why were milliners and dressmakers important to not just the woman, but the men who lived in Colorado? May want to think about the industries you have just looked at and who worked those the most?
- Sugar Beets: Why do you think farmers could grow sugar beets in Colorado's plains?

4. Bring their attention to the word INDUSTRY on the board. Ask if any have heard this word before and what they think it means along with that they have been looking and talking about?
5. Give them the meaning of industry if it has not been brought out.

Industry Dig on what the industry looks like now: 30 - 40 minutes

1. Give each student an "industry research" worksheet to research the industry where they are sitting. Give them a good amount of time to research, you could give them time during independent reading time if needed.
2. Create groups that have one student from each industry where they can share their findings.
3. Bring them back as a whole group and have them share what they learned about the word industry and that these seven industries are important to Colorado history.

Strategy Instruction Differentiation:

1. Both handouts can be provided on the computer for students to type on or use speech to text and text to speech.
2. The pictures can be used virtually for technology support.
3. Students can draw pictures to express their learning and questions if they are not able to write.

Assessment:

1. Formative: Walking around and listening to the discussions that are taking place, watching for engagement during all three activities.
2. Summative: Use the Building Futures handout to see if they are able to read, write, and comprehend social studies content.

2022 Colorado Social Studies Standards:

- SS.4.1.GLE1.EO.a: Draw inferences about Colorado history from primary sources (photos, maps, artifacts).
- SS.4.1.GLE1.EO.b: Identify cause-and-effect relationships using primary sources to understand Colorado's development.
- SS.4.1.GLE2.EO.b: Explain the relationship between major events, key industries, and U.S. history during the same era.
- SS.4.1.GLE2.EO.e: Describe past and present interactions among people, cultures, and economic developments in Colorado.
- SS.4.3.GLE1.EO.a: Define economic incentives and explain how people respond to them in business and industry.

2020 Colorado Reading, Writing, and Communicating Standards:

- RWC.3.1.1.b: Follow agreed-upon rules for collaborative discussions and active listening.
- RWC.3.3.2.d: Write informative/explanatory texts using facts and details to convey ideas clearly.
- RWC.4.1.1.a: Prepare for collaborative discussions by drawing on required materials.

- RWC.4.1.1.c: Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify, follow up, and contribute to group discussions.
- RWC.4.2.2.a: Refer to details and examples in informational text to explain explicit meaning and draw inferences.
- RWC.4.3.2.a-b: Write informative/explanatory texts using concrete details, facts, and definitions to examine a topic

Extension Activities:

Use the History Take Out website or kit. Have students pick an entrepreneur from one of the seven major industries from Colorado and do a biography report on them.

1. Write or type up the information they find on their person
2. Create a small poster highlighting the person, the industry they were involved with and their impact on Colorado history.
3. Dress up like the person and give an oral presentation either like they are the person or about the person.

Additional Resources:

1. What happened to the sugar beet industry in Colorado? Source: Colorado Public Radio.
2. Sugar Beet Industry. Source: Colorado Encyclopedia.
3. How ice harvesting thrived — and then disappeared — in southern Colorado. Source: Rocky Mountain PBS.
4. The Ice Industry in the Pikes Peak region. Source: Ute Pass Historical Society.
5. Fashions Through the Decades. Source: Fort Collins History Connection.

Western Work: Colorado Industries of the Past

Flour Mills:





Source: [Western Mining History]

Mining:



Source: [Western Mining History]



Source: [Western Mining History]

Saddlery & Spurs:





Ice:





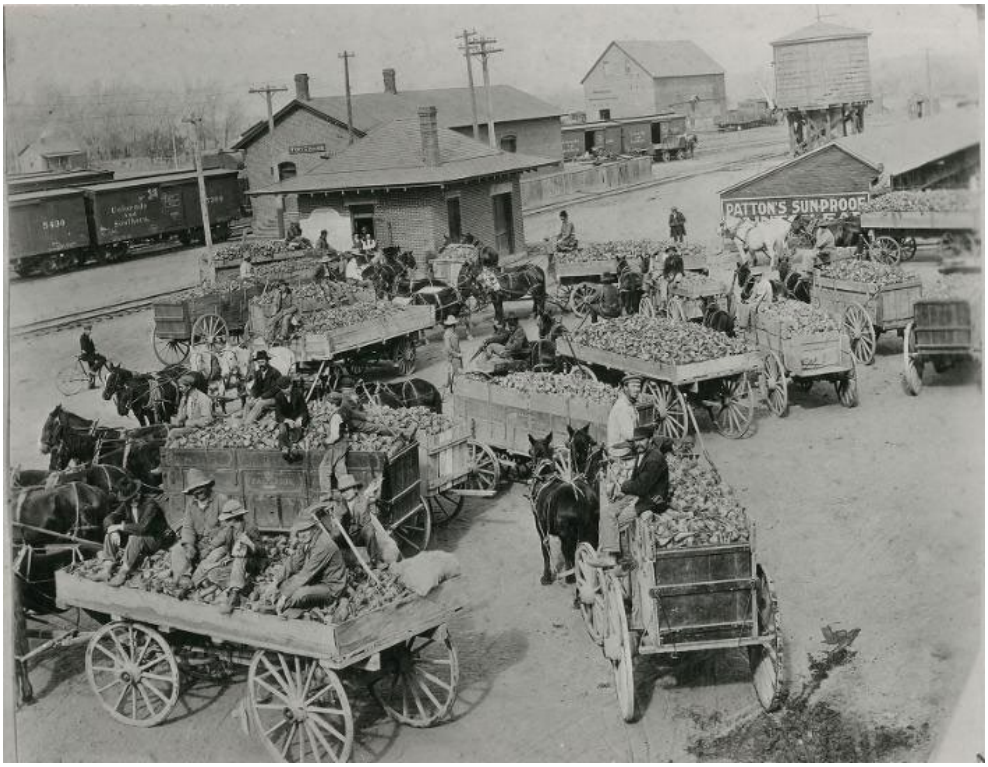
Millinery & Dressmaking:





Sugar Beets:





INDUSTRY

I Know	I Wonder

Industry Dig Name:_____

Industry Researching: _____

What natural resources are needed for this industry?

_____

_____

_____

What tools are needed? _____

_____

_____

_____

What jobs are humans doing for this industry? _____

_____

_____

_____

Is this industry still producing today and where? In Colorado?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who were the important people who helped to get this industry started?

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