

Table of Contents and  
Sample Unit from

# America the Beautiful Part 1

Part of the *America the Beautiful* Curriculum

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*America the Beautiful*  
Part 1: *America from 1000 to 1877*  
by Charlene Notgrass

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# A Belief in Manifest Destiny

James K. Polk served as America's eleventh President from 1845 to 1849. Polk and many other Americans at the time believed that America had a Manifest Destiny to extend from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. This belief influenced Polk's decision to go to war with Mexico. Thousands of Americans acted upon the concept of Manifest Destiny when they moved west on the Oregon Trail.

While Polk was President, the Smithsonian Institution began in Washington, D.C. People began taking tours of the Cave of the Wind at beautiful Niagara Falls and riding the *Maid of the Mist* steamboat across the Niagara River. John James Audubon had completed his *Birds of America* and was working on his mammal paintings for a new book.



*Setting Out on the Oregon Trail*

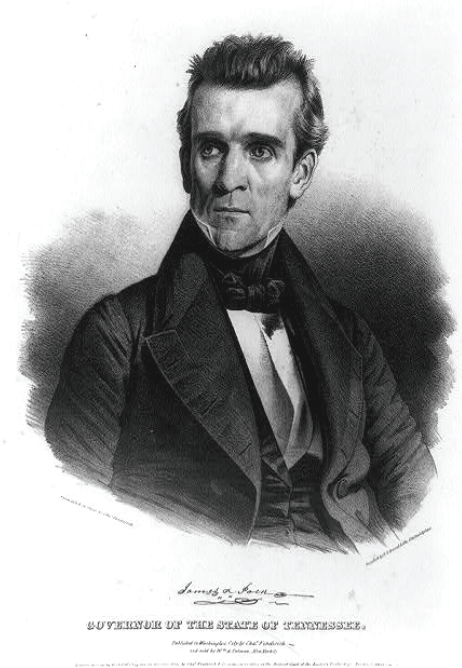
## Lessons in Unit 12

- Lesson 56 – Our American Story: James K. Polk and the Mexican War
- Lesson 57 – Daily Life: Moving West on the Oregon Trail
- Lesson 58 – An American Landmark: The Smithsonian Institution
- Lesson 59 – God's Wonders: God Created Niagara Falls
- Lesson 60 – An American Biography: John James Audubon, Artist and Naturalist

## Books Used in Unit 12

- *Maps of America the Beautiful*
- *Timeline of America the Beautiful*
- *We the People*
- *Bound for Oregon* by Jean Van Leeuwen

# James K. Polk and the Mexican War



*James K. Polk, Governor of Tennessee*

When George Washington became the first President of the United States in 1789, he led just thirteen states huddled along the Atlantic coast, plus a territory that spread between those colonies and the Mississippi River. In 1803 America gained over 800,000 square miles with the Louisiana Purchase. Florida became part of the U.S. in 1821.

## Manifest Destiny

Many Americans dreamed of a time when America could expand all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Some even believed that God wanted this to happen. In 1845 a newspaper editor wrote: "Our manifest destiny is to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." People began to use the phrase Manifest Destiny to express this

belief. It is sad that many Americans did not honor the Native Americans when they pursued this "manifest destiny." Surely there was a way to share America the Beautiful with the people who already lived here. We should remember what Jesus said were the two greatest commandments: to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:28-31).

## James K. Polk Elected President

Americans were tired of the economic difficulties that occurred while Democrat Martin Van Buren was President. The voters elected Whig candidates William Henry Harrison and John Tyler as President and Vice President in 1840. Four years later, the Whigs nominated Henry Clay and the Democrats nominated a young friend of Andrew Jackson, fellow Tennessean James K. Polk. During the campaign, the Democrats promised that America would expand into the West. The election was close, but Polk was victorious.

Events in American politics are important news in other countries. This was true in the 1840s, too. The illustration below of James K. Polk taking the oath of office was in the April 19, 1845, issue of the *Illustrated London News*.



*Inauguration of James K. Polk*

## The Oregon Question

In the late 1700s, Great Britain claimed the area around the Columbia River as a British territory. Americans working for John Jacob Astor's fur trading company founded the settlement of Astoria near the Columbia River in 1811. During the War of 1812, the residents of Astoria learned that a British ship was coming to capture the settlement, so they sold it to a Canadian fur company. By the end of the War of 1812, America was also claiming Oregon country, saying that an American had discovered the Columbia River, Lewis and Clark had explored it, and Americans had settled in Astoria. The treaty ending the War of 1812 stated that both America and Great Britain would return any lands they had taken during the war. Astoria was returned to the United States. In 1818 Great Britain and America signed a treaty that they would hold the Oregon country jointly.

Oregon country extended southward to the northern border of California. In the north it reached the tip of Alaska, which was then controlled by Russia. Oregon country encompassed the present-day states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington; portions of Montana and Wyoming; and parts of Canada. By the time James K. Polk was elected President, many Americans, especially Democrats, wanted America to control all of Oregon country. They were willing to go to war with Great Britain if necessary. The northern tip of Oregon country was at the 54° 40' parallel of latitude, so their slogan was "54° 40' or Fight." However, Great Britain and America came up with a peaceful solution in 1846. They divided Oregon country at the 49th parallel of latitude, which was already the border between the U.S. and Canada from east of Oregon to Lake Superior. America then extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean across its northern states and territories.



## The Texas Question

Meanwhile, another territory problem loomed to the south in Texas. Texas had declared itself an independent country in 1836. Many Texans wanted to become part of the the United States. Mexico did not recognize the independence of Texas. At first America did not recognize it either. Two main problems caused American leaders to be uncertain about what to do. First, recognizing Texas as independent might cause war with Mexico. Second, taking Texas in as a territory would expand slavery into more of the United States.



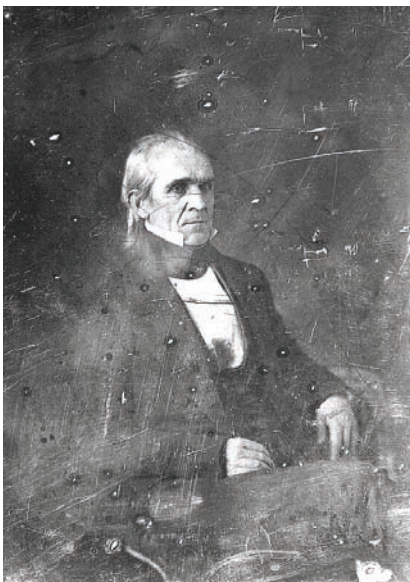
*The Polk Home in Columbia, Tennessee*

Andrew Jackson waited as long as he could before recognizing the independent Republic of Texas. He recognized it on his last day in office. The Van Buren and Tyler administrations took little action on the Texas question. After the election of James K. Polk, Congress offered Texas the opportunity to become first a U.S. territory and later a state. Texans accepted the offer and Texas became the 28th state in December of 1845. After Texas became a part of the United States, the term Texan gradually replaced the term Texian, which was based on the Spanish word *Tejano*.

America then had two problems with Mexico. Mexico did not recognize Texas statehood, and the two countries did not agree on the location of the Texas border. America said the southern border of Texas was the Rio Grande, while Mexico said the border was farther north at the Nueces River. President Polk offered to pay Mexico for Texas, California, and the area in between. Mexico refused to negotiate.

## The Mexican War

Polk sent troops to the area between the Rio Grande and the Nueces, believing he should defend American land. Mexico saw this move as an invasion and attacked the American soldiers. On May 13, 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico. Many Americans who lived in New England and most people belonging to the Whig Party opposed the war, calling it "Mr. Polk's War."



*Brady Daguerrotype of James K. Polk*

In June Americans in Sacramento, California, declared California to be an independent republic. In July the U.S. Navy took over the area and declared it to be a U.S. territory. In September of 1847, American troops invaded Mexico and captured Mexico City.

The telegraph was used to send Americans reports from the Mexican War. Some American officers who served in the war later fought in the Civil War, including Robert E. Lee, Thomas (later called Stonewall) Jackson, George Pickett, Ulysses S. Grant, and George McClellan.

The Mexican War ended when a treaty was signed in February of 1848, less than two years after the war had

started. The United States agreed to purchase Texas, California, and the lands in between. This area was about the same size as the Louisiana Purchase. The U.S. government paid fifteen million dollars for the land.

While Polk was President, America added two more states to the Union besides Texas. Iowa became the 29th state in 1846 and Wisconsin the 30th in 1848. The first U.S. postage stamp was issued during Polk's presidency and the Naval Academy was established.

In his 1844 campaign, James K. Polk promised to pursue westward expansion. In one term, he accomplished his goals. True to his word, he did not seek a second term. Voters were unhappy about the Mexican War, so Polk's Democratic Party lost the 1848 election to the Whig candidate. Read about Polk's life below.



**James Knox Polk**  
**America's Eleventh President**  
**March 4, 1845 - March 4, 1849**

James Knox Polk was born in North Carolina in 1795. His father was a farmer and surveyor. When James was ten years old, the Polk family moved to Tennessee. Even though he lived on the rugged frontier, James was not physically strong. When he was seventeen years old, he required surgery, a rare event in that day.

Polk had only two and a half years of formal schooling, but he was able to enter the University of North Carolina as a sophomore. He graduated with honors in mathematics and the classics. Polk returned to Tennessee, studied law, and established a law practice in Columbia, Tennessee. The home of Polk's parents in Columbia is now a museum. It is pictured on page 310.

Polk was elected to the Tennessee legislature when he was twenty-seven years old. While serving in the legislature, he met the daughter of a prominent planter. Sarah Childress had been educated at a Moravian school in North Carolina. There she studied the Bible, drawing, English grammar, geography, Greek and Roman literature, music, and sewing. After marrying Polk, Sarah became a trusted advisor in both personal and political matters. She served as his secretary. The above illustrations of President and Mrs. Polk were created by Currier and Ives.

Polk was an ardent supporter of fellow Democrat and Tennessean Andrew Jackson. At age 29, Polk was elected to serve in the U. S. House of Representatives. He eventually served as its Speaker. After fourteen years in Washington, Polk returned to Tennessee and won election as Governor. He served one two-year term. Though he ran for Governor twice more, he did not win the governorship again. His Democrat friends in Washington did not forget him. When they needed a strong candidate for the 1844 election, they chose James K. Polk.

While in the White House, James and Sarah Polk honored their beliefs by forbidding alcohol and dancing in the White House. Sarah worked to enhance the beauty of the presidential home. She is given credit for having the song "Hail to the Chief" played to honor the President.

James K. Polk left the White House exhausted. Notice how much older President Polk looked in the photo on page 310 than Governor Polk looked in the drawing on page 308. President Polk died of cholera at age 53 a few months after leaving office. No other President has died at such a young age, except those who were assassinated. Polk's gravesite is pictured below.

Sarah Polk made her home at Polk Place in Nashville, Tennessee, where she was greatly admired. Soon after her husband's death, Sarah Polk's great niece was orphaned. Sarah became the child's guardian. Sally Polk Jetty remained with her great aunt the rest of Sarah's life.

In 1877 Sarah was given the first telephone in Nashville. President Hayes visited her in 1887. In 1888 she received a visit from President Cleveland and was also given the honor of turning on electric lights in Cincinnati. Sarah Childress Polk lived for forty-two years after the death of her husband. She died at Polk Place in 1891 at 87 years of age.



*A Photograph of Polk's Grave, Taken While Union Forces Occupied Nashville During the Civil War*

We may not agree with every decision that Polk made as President, but we can admire his personal consistency in doing what he believed to be right. Paul is an example to us in this as well:

... I also do my best to maintain always  
a blameless conscience  
both before God and before men.  
Acts 24:16

## Activities for Lesson 56

**Map Study** – Complete the assignments for Lesson 56 on Map 18 “The West” and Map 20 “The Lower 48” in *Maps of America the Beautiful*.

**Timeline** – In *Timeline of America the Beautiful* next to 1877, write: Sarah Polk is given the first telephone in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Vocabulary** – Look up each of these words in a dictionary: huddled, destiny, jointly, latitude, ardent. Write each word and its definition in your notebook.

**Literature** – Read “Hail to the Chief” in *We the People*, page 55, and chapter 1 in *Bound for Oregon*.

**Creative Writing** – In your notebook, write two or three paragraphs about your thoughts on “manifest destiny.” Do you agree that America had the right to make Native Americans move from their land? Do you think America was right to insist on control over lands claimed by Mexico and Great Britain?

**Student Workbook or Lesson Review** – If you are using one of these optional books, complete the assignment for Lesson 56.



# Moving West on the Oregon Trail

In 1836 Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and three other missionaries headed toward Oregon in a covered wagon. No white woman had ever crossed the Rocky Mountains before. They left from Liberty, Missouri. Soon they entered Western lands dotted only with Native American villages and a few fur trading posts. By the time they reached British Fort Vancouver, their wagon had long been abandoned, but they made it!



*A Couple on the Oregon Trail*

Just seven years later in 1843, one thousand pioneers set out on the same journey the Whitmans had accomplished. These pioneers were the beginning of “the great migration.” Between 1843 and 1869, over 500,000 people traveled on the Oregon Trail. It was the best way to get across the Rocky Mountains. Many pioneers were bound for the rich farmland of the Willamette Valley in Oregon, while others went on to Washington. Look at the photo below. An Oregon Trail pioneer carved the year 1846 on this rock as he or she traveled through Wyoming that year. Some stopped when they reached Idaho, while others turned south there, taking the California Trail down to California, Nevada, or Utah.

One out of ten who set out to complete the two-thousand-mile journey died along the way. Most of these died from disease. Still, nine out of ten made it. They walked or rode through Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Idaho. These pioneers were brave, strong, and courageous. Look at the illustration above.

Those who wanted to reach California or the Northwest without taking the trail had only one alternative. They could go by ship. That is how many of the British got to Oregon



*Pioneer Carving in Wyoming, 1846*

country. The ship route was not easy. The Panama Canal had not yet been built. Travelers not taking the Oregon Trail to California or the Northwest had two choices: go around the tip of South America or sail to Panama, walk through the mosquito-infested jungles, and then wait for a ship to pick them up on the other side. The water route was not practical for many of the pioneers because they lived in the

central regions of America and were not close to the Atlantic. Most decided that the best way to go was on the Oregon Trail.

## Marcus and Narcissa Whitman

John Whitman came to the Massachusetts Bay colony sometime before December of 1638. Marcus Whitman was of the seventh generation of this family in America. He was born on the New York frontier in 1802. His father died when he was about seven years old, so he went to live with an uncle in Massachusetts. His uncle was a pious man who took good care of him and taught him about God. In his teen years, Marcus went to a school taught by a Congregational minister. Like Noah Webster and many other Americans, he had a conversion experience at a revival held during the Second Great Awakening (see page 235). Young Whitman decided to become a minister.

When Marcus was eighteen, he returned to the home of his mother, who had married again. His family was not pleased with his decision to become a minister because the training took seven years. At first, Marcus worked in his stepfather's tannery and shoe business and then studied to become a medical doctor. He practiced medicine in Wheeler, New York, for several years. He was active in his community and in the Presbyterian church until he was in his early thirties. At that time, he became a missionary doctor with the Boston-based American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions.

The missions board sent Whitman on an exploratory trip to the Rocky Mountains to search for a mission site. Before he left, Marcus traveled to Amity, New York, to meet Narcissa Prentiss and her family. Narcissa had also applied to the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions to become a missionary. She was turned down because she was an unmarried female. Marcus went to meet Narcissa because he wanted to find a wife. He proposed at the end of their visit and she accepted.

Marcus Whitman traveled west in a caravan heading to an annual mountain man and fur trapper rendezvous. At first, this Christian who did not drink alcohol was not accepted by the men in the caravan. However, when Whitman treated them for an outbreak of cholera, he began to be appreciated. While at the rendezvous, he removed an iron arrowhead from mountain man Jim Bridger's back (see page 252) and performed operations on others.

Whitman wrote to the Board of Foreign Missions, telling them that he believed that women could make the trip across the Rockies. He also convinced minister Henry Spalding that he and his wife should become part of a mission team.

Marcus and Narcissa were married in February of 1836. As the ceremony came to a close, the congregation sang a hymn. One by one they were overcome with emotion at the thought of the couple leaving for the west. By the end of the hymn, only Narcissa was still singing. The Whitmans had a different honeymoon from those who traveled to places like Niagara Falls. The Whitmans' honeymoon was to be on the Oregon Trail.

The Whitmans met up with the Spaldings in Cincinnati. In Missouri the Whitmans, Spaldings, and William Gray, a mechanic and carpenter appointed by the mission board, prepared to travel west. As they traveled, Narcissa wrote long, detailed letters back home.

From these, we learn of their experience on the Oregon Trail. At first, Dr. Spalding and Mr. Gray drove their livestock overland, while Marcus, Narcissa, and Eliza Spalding waited for a steamboat to take them to a fur trading post. When it did not arrive, they traveled by wagon. The mission team members got back together in Nebraska. They traveled fifteen to twenty miles a day until they reached Fort Laramie. There they left their heavy wagon, got rid of excess baggage, packed their goods on animals, and traveled as far as they could on a light wagon. On July 4 the group crossed over the Continental Divide. That day Narcissa and Eliza became the first white women to cross the Rocky Mountains. Below is a photograph taken along the modern Continental Divide Trail. In the distance are the Oregon Buttes, a landmark that travelers looked for on the Oregon Trail.

On July 6 the mission team reached the rendezvous point that Marcus Whitman had visited the year before. Two Hudson Bay Company fur trappers agreed to accompany the mission team for the remaining seven hundred miles to the Columbia River. Soon their wagon broke down and the men turned it into a two-wheeled cart. On August 19 the group stopped at Fort Boise. They rested a few days and headed out again, leaving even their cart behind. The Whitmans and William Gray reached Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia River on September 1 and the Spaldings arrived with their livestock on September 3. There the mission team secured passage on a boat and traveled for another two hundred miles to Fort Vancouver to get supplies. The Whitmans' honeymoon journey from New York had lasted 207 days. They had covered three thousand miles.

The British fur trading company at Fort Vancouver was gracious to the missionaries, selling them all they needed to set up their missions. Marcus Whitman decided to build his mission among the Cayuse tribe in Washington. Spalding built his among the Nez Perce.

In 1842 Marcus Whitman traveled to the east to meet with his mission board. After the visit, he headed back to Oregon, bringing with him a thirteen-year-old nephew who wanted to join him. On their way back to Oregon, they came upon the first wagon train of one thousand settlers going from Missouri to Oregon, mentioned on page 313. Marcus Whitman became their guide.

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman spent the rest of their lives among the Cayuse people. They took in children who were half-Native American and half-white. As more people began to travel on the Oregon Trail, they knew that they could stop at the Whitmans' mission for food, shelter, and medical care. With one group of travelers were seven children who had become orphans along the trail after both their



*Continental Divide Trail with Oregon Buttes in the Distance*



parents died. The Whitmans took them all into their home. They cared for a total of eleven children, including their nephew.

When a measles epidemic broke out among the Cayuse near the mission, Dr. Whitman could not cure them. Many of them died. According to Cayuse tradition, the Cayuse people had the right to kill a medicine man if he treated a patient and the patient later died. In 1847 a few Cayuse tribesmen killed Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and many immigrants who were staying at the mission.

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman are highly esteemed in the Pacific Northwest. The statue of Marcus Whitman at right is one of Washington State's two statues in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol.



*Marcus Whitman Statue  
in the United States Capitol*

## Waiting for Spring

Emigrants preparing to go west on the Oregon Trail headed for “jumping off” towns along the Missouri River each spring. Most went to Independence, Missouri. There they camped while waiting for spring grasses to grow. By April or May, the grass was usually ready and the travelers could head out. They would never make it to Oregon unless their oxen and mules had food to eat along the way. Oxen and mules were better suited to the Oregon Trail than horses were. Both types of animals had advantages and disadvantages. Oxen were gentle, but slow; mules were faster, but usually stubborn.

## Covered Wagons

People heading out on the trail often rode up the Missouri River by steamboat and then prepared to head overland in covered wagons. They used farm wagons with front wheels that could be steered left or right. The coverings were made of cotton, and were treated with linseed oil in hopes that it would keep them from leaking. They still leaked.

Families purchased food to eat along the way. A family of four needed to take more than one thousand pounds of food on the journey. When farm implements and furniture were added to the food in the wagon, the weight often reached one ton. When it was time to head west, the wagons often got into traffic jams. Not everyone who decided to make



the trip had the necessary skills. Some didn't even know how to drive a wagon. It didn't take the travelers long to realize they had brought too much along, so they started throwing things out. Entrepreneurs from the jumping off towns rode out and picked items up along the trail and then took them back to town to sell to someone else. Families often carried so much cargo in their wagons that the people had to walk. Look at the drawing at left. Imagine going on a two-thousand-mile walk!

## Trail Landmarks

When we travel today, we look for signs to help us know where we are. Oregon Trail travelers had to look for landmarks like rivers and geological formations. When travelers came to a large river, enterprising ferrymen were waiting to take them across—sometimes for a high price. Ferrymen could charge whatever they liked. One company earned \$65,000 in one summer. After a time, so many travelers had passed over the trail that new pioneers didn't have trouble finding their way. They could see the ruts left by previous wagon trains, like those on pages 318 and 319. Still, the landmarks helped them know how far they



*Emigrants enjoyed the spring near Scotts Bluff in Nebraska.*

had come and how far they had to go. The landmarks also broke the monotony in landscapes when there was little in view besides ruts, sagebrush, and desert. A few geological formations found along the trail are pictured below. The pioneers looked forward to some landmarks in particular, like Soda Springs with its naturally-carbonated water. When they added a little of the sugar stored in their wagons to the water, they had a refreshing treat.



*Rocks Avenue in Wyoming*



*Emigrants crossed the Snake River in Idaho.*



*The Oregon Trail passed by Wyoming's Devil's Gate.*

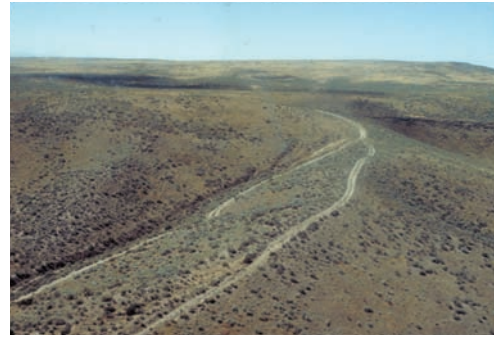


*The Oregon Trail in Idaho near Wild Horse Butte*



## A Day on the Trail

The schedule for most days on the trail was about the same. At night travelers circled their wagons, as shown in the illustration below. This was not to protect themselves from Native Americans, but to make a sort of fence or corral for their livestock. They gathered what wood they could find and started a fire for supper. The trail got more and more crowded over the years, so wood became harder to find. When the emigrants couldn't find wood, they made fires with buffalo dung. Sometimes they were able to shoot quail or buffalo to add to their meals, but often the only things they had to eat were bread and bacon. Travelers often sang hymns around their campfires at night. Some families slept in tents and others slept under the stars. They rose before sunrise, cooked breakfast, and set out for the day. At midday, they took an hour lunch break. By six o'clock, they had traveled about fifteen miles since breakfast and it was time to circle the wagons again and fix supper.



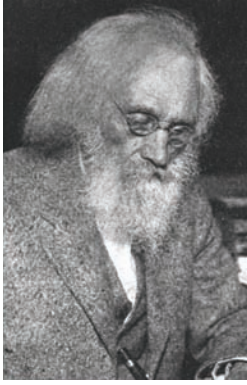
*Ruts in the Desert Along the Oregon Trail*

## Remembering the Oregon Trail

In 1852 Ezra Meeker traveled the Oregon Trail. In 1906 he drove an ox-drawn wagon back over the trail from west to east. He was seventy-six years old. His purpose was to raise money to place commemorative markers along the trail. Meeker gave lectures and wrote articles for magazines and newspapers. He sold booklets and postcards and asked people



*This drawing from Harper's Weekly of June 12, 1869 shows wagons circled. A pole sticking out of a wagon holds pots over a campfire. A woman on the left sits in a ladderback chair while she sews.*



Ezra Meeker

to make donations. At left is a photograph of Meeker. One of his markers is pictured below.

Today people continue what Meeker began. Modern travelers retrace portions of the Oregon Trail while on Western vacations. Wagon ruts can be found in many places in the West.

The journey on the Oregon Trail took about four to six months. We can admire the endurance of those travelers. The book of Hebrews teaches us about the importance of spiritual endurance when it tells about people in the Old Testament who endured:

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.  
Hebrews 12:1

### Activities for Lesson 57

**Thinking Biblically** – Marcus and Narcissa Whitman left all to follow Jesus. Copy Luke 9:23-24 into your notebook.

**Map Study** – Complete the assignments for Lesson 57 on Map 18 “The West” in *Maps of America the Beautiful*.

**Timeline** – In *Timeline of America the Beautiful* next to 1906 write: Ezra Meeker retraces his journey on the Oregon Trail.

**Literature** – Read “First Woman on the Oregon Trail” in *We the People*, page 56, and chapter 2 in *Bound for Oregon*.

**Student Workbook or Lesson Review** – If you are using one of these optional books, complete the assignment for Lesson 57.



A Meeker Marker



Wagon Train Ruts in the West



# The Smithsonian Institution

British scientist James Smithson prepared his last will and testament in 1826. He left most of his estate to his nephew. He added the stipulation that if his nephew died with no heirs, the estate would then go to the United States of America. Smithson required that the U.S. use the money to found an institution to “increase and diffuse knowledge among men.” Smithson stated that this institution should be called the Smithsonian Institution. No one knows why this scientist made this decision. He never visited the United States, and no record exists that he ever corresponded with anyone in America. James Smithson died three years after creating his will. After his death, the contents of his will became news in both America and Europe. Six years later his nephew died leaving no heirs.



*Renwick's Smithsonian Castle*

## Who Was James Smithson?

James Smithson was born in France in 1765. His father was an Englishman who became the first Duke of Northumberland. His mother had royal blood. Smithson inherited his great wealth from her estate.

Smithson graduated from Pembroke College, a part of Oxford University. He studied mineralogy and chemistry. He was a diligent student and researcher. He published many scientific papers on chemistry, geology, and mineralogy. One was about the chemical structure of a lady's tear; another was about a better way to make coffee.

## America Receives Her Bequest

The year that James Smithson's nephew died, President Andrew Jackson announced the gift to Congress. Jackson was unsure whether the Constitution gave him authority to accept this present, so he asked Congress to pass a law allowing him to do so. The prospect of the gift caused controversy. People were divided over whether America should accept it. Senator John C. Calhoun thought it was beneath the dignity of America to accept gifts. However, in 1836 Congress agreed to accept the generous endowment of James Smithson.



President Jackson chose diplomat and lawyer Richard Rush to go to England to retrieve the gift. The mother of Smithson's nephew tried to get the money, so Rush had to fight for it in the British Court of Chancery. America won the case, so Rush proceeded to sell Smithson's properties and convert his assets into British gold sovereigns (coins).

Today large sums of money can be transferred from one bank to another electronically. That was not possible in July of 1838 when Rush boarded a ship bound for America. With him were eleven boxes which contained 104,960 gold sovereigns, eight shillings, and sevenpence. Rush also brought Smithson's personal library of 213 volumes, his mineral collection, scientific notes, and personal belongings. After a voyage of six weeks, Rush arrived in New York. He sent a request to the U.S. Secretary of State, asking that he be allowed to rest after his long voyage before coming to Washington.

The gold sovereigns were deposited in the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia. When melted down, they yielded a value of \$508,318.46. Other items in Smithson's estate became part of the Smithsonian Institution's collection. At right is a list of some of the possessions Mr. Smithson had at the time of his death.

### What Should America Do With the Money?

With Smithson's gift safely in hand, America's leaders had to decide what to do with it. Congressmen, Senators, educators, and everyday citizens offered suggestions. Ideas included a national university, a teacher training college, and a school to promote better living conditions through science. A professor from the University of Virginia thought the Smithsonian Institution should teach chemistry, geology, and mineralogy, as Smithson himself had studied. The president of Brown University wanted a university that would teach only the classics, since science and technology were so often used to make war. Alexander Dallas Bache, great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin, wanted the Institution to support scientific research, believing it could do that better than universities could.

Since the Library of Congress was small at that time, one Massachusetts Senator wanted the Smithsonian to be a national library. Congressman John Quincy Adams introduced a bill that would establish the Smithsonian Institution as a national observatory where people could study astronomy. In 1840 a group of politicians began to talk about a national museum which would house objects from America's history, show America's technology, and tell about America's natural resources.

#### Personal Belongings of James Smithson, Esquire

Carriage  
Silver forks, spoons, and ladles  
One pin with sixteen small diamonds  
One ring of agate  
One cameo ring  
One tortoise shell box  
Sixteen shirts  
Forty-four pocket handkerchiefs  
Thirteen pairs of stockings  
Three night caps  
Four pairs of gloves  
One telescope  
Silver-plated candlesticks  
Gun  
Two portraits in oval frames  
Landscape painting in gilt frame  
Teapot  
Milk jug  
Two plates  
Twelve cups and saucers  
Six coffee mugs  
*Travels through North America, Two Volumes*  
*Struggles Through Life*  
*Domestic Cookery*

## Founding of the Smithsonian Institution

After ten years of debate, Congress passed "An Act to Establish the Smithsonian Institution" in 1846. They dropped the idea of a national university, but the bill combined many other ideas that had been put forth. The bill stated that the Institution must be faithful to Smithson's desire for it to increase and diffuse knowledge. President James K. Polk signed the bill into law on August 10, 1846. Finally, Smithson's vision would become a reality.

## The Smithsonian Institution Castle

In the Act establishing the Smithsonian, Congress declared that it should have an art gallery, lecture hall, library, chemical laboratory, natural history laboratory, and science museum. A Smithsonian Building Committee was formed to oversee the building of a structure that could house these components. The committee worked with architect James Renwick Jr., who later became the architect of Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

Renwick started to work on the building's design in 1846. He decided on a medieval style reminiscent of English universities. The design was asymmetrical, meaning that its two sides were not mirror images of each other. One end would be rectangular and the other would look like a chapel. He designed nine turrets, each with a distinct style.

The red sandstone building was constructed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It is pictured on pages 320 and 323. The National Mall is a large, open space, lined with many of Washington's most famous buildings and monuments. Renwick's building has been nicknamed the



*The Smithsonian's N.R. Wood mounts a bird in 1916.*



*A Blackfeet Chief makes a phonograph record at the Smithsonian in 1916.*



*Transcribing Indian Music at the Smithsonian*





*Aerial View of the Smithsonian Castle and Other Facilities*

“Castle.” After it was finished in 1855, it housed all of the Smithsonian museums, plus an apartment for the Secretary and his family. The Smithsonian Institution had outgrown the Castle by 1881 and began to add additional facilities.

## The Smithsonian Today

The Smithsonian Institution is the world’s largest museum system. It now has sixteen museums. Among these are the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of American History, the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Portrait Gallery, and the National Museum of Natural History. Notice the man at the top of page 322. He was preparing a specimen for the natural history museum in 1916. Many Smithsonian museums are along the National Mall. Most are open to the public free of charge 364 days a year, every day except Christmas.

The Smithsonian has a research library with over one million volumes. Notice the woman pictured on page 322 who is recording a Native American chief and listening to a recording. The Smithsonian Institution sends traveling exhibits across the country. It publishes books and has a monthly magazine. The National Zoo is part of the Smithsonian.



*Chair Belonging to the Marquis de Lafayette  
Displayed in the Smithsonian in 1913*

The Smithsonian has millions of objects in its collections. It includes objects as diverse as the compass William Clark used on the Lewis and Clark expedition, the airplane Wilbur and Orville Wright flew at Kitty Hawk, a rock from the moon, the ruby red slippers Dorothy wore in *The Wizard of Oz*, the Hope Diamond, and a chair owned by Lafayette, pictured at left.

Today the Smithsonian Board of Regents includes the Vice President of the United States, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, three Senators, three members of the House of Representatives, and nine private citizens. The Board selects its Secretary, who is responsible for leading the Institution. In addition to the money supplied from the James Smithson Trust, Congress appropriates tax money for the Smithsonian Institution. Many foundations, corporations, and individuals also contribute to it.

The Smithsonian Institution does not openly honor God, but we can learn about God there because the Smithsonian showcases amazing things that God has created:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes,  
His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen,  
being understood through what has been made . . . .

Romans 1:20

## Activities for Lesson 58

**Thinking Biblically** – Read about Solomon’s wisdom and scientific knowledge in 1 Kings 4:29-34.

**Map Study** – Complete the assignment for Lesson 58 on Map 3 “American Landmarks” in *Maps of America the Beautiful*.

**Timeline** – In *Timeline of America the Beautiful* next to 1846, write: The Smithsonian Institution is established.

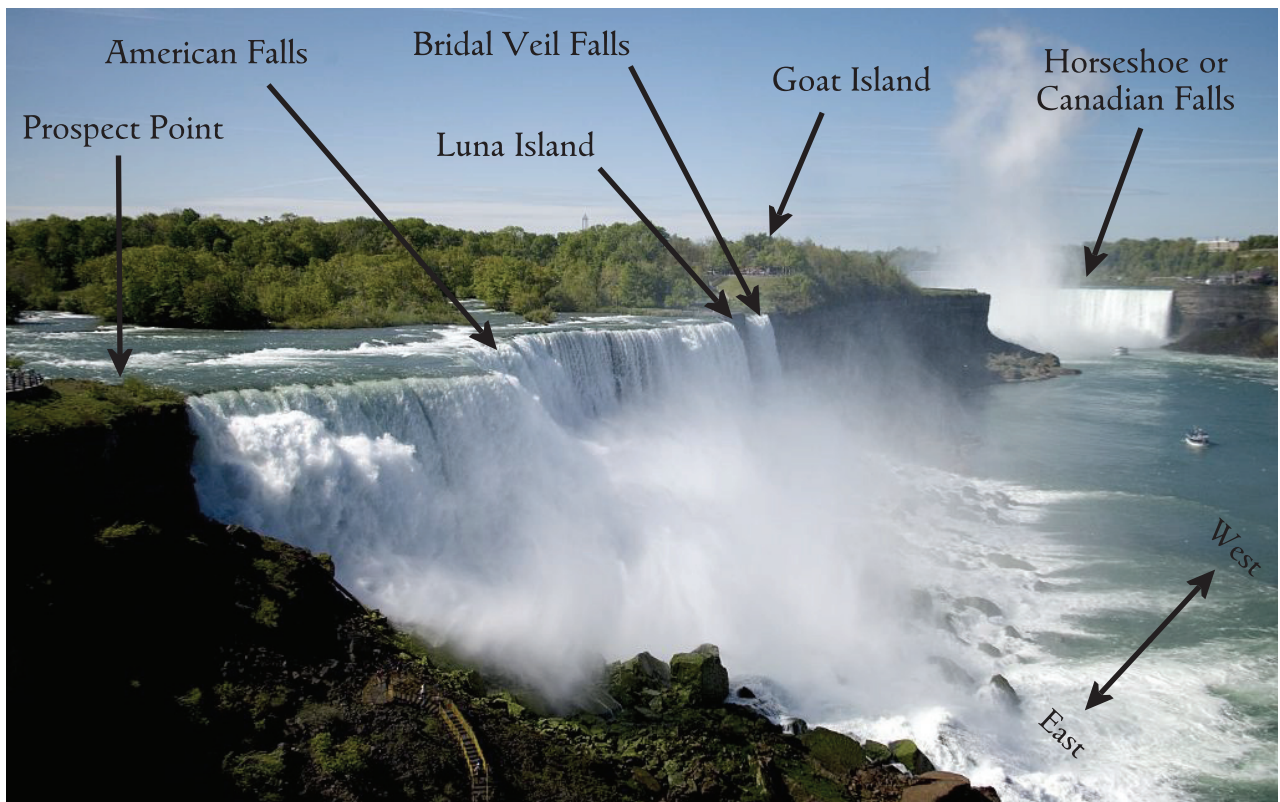
**Literature** – Read “An Act to Establish the Smithsonian Institution” in *We the People*, page 57, and chapters 3-4 in *Bound for Oregon*.

**Student Workbook or Lesson Review** – If you are using one of these optional books, complete the assignment for Lesson 58.

# God Created Niagara Falls

God created a breathtaking waterfall along the United States-Canada border. It is called Niagara Falls. As the Niagara River flows northward from Lake Erie, it descends 326 feet before reaching Lake Ontario. Over half of the drop happens at once, when the river plunges 188 feet over Niagara Falls. When the river reaches the falls, Goat Island divides it into two channels. Goat Island and the falls south of it are in the United States. The falls to the north of Goat Island are in Canada. Examine this photograph of Niagara Falls. It was taken from the American side.

American Falls begins just past Prospect Point. Next is tiny Luna Island, then Bridal Veil Falls. On the other side of Goat Island is Canada with its Horseshoe or Canadian Falls. Horseshoe Falls looks small in the photo because it is in the distance and most of it is hidden by Goat Island. Actually, it is the largest of the falls of Niagara. Look at more views of Horseshoe Falls on page 326. The crest of American Falls is 850 feet wide, Bridal Veil Falls is fifty feet wide, and Horseshoe Falls is 2,200 feet wide.







*Three Views of Horseshoe Falls*

Niagara Falls is one of the largest waterfalls in the world (notice its size in the NASA photo below), but it is not the tallest. God created about five hundred waterfalls that are taller than Niagara. One reason this falls is so beautiful and impressive is because so much water flows over it. The water going over Niagara Falls comes from four of the world's largest lakes: Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, and Lake Erie (see Lesson 13). An average of 194,940 cubic feet of water flows over Niagara Falls every second. About ten percent flows over the American Falls and about ninety percent over Horseshoe Falls. The water has been known to travel as fast as sixty-eight miles per hour when it goes over the precipice, the edge over which the water flows. The deepest section of the Niagara River is below the falls, where the water is 170 feet deep.



*Rainbow at Niagara Falls*



*NASA Image of Horseshoe Falls*

When the water hits the rocks at the bottom of the falls, a mist rises, as you can see in the photos on pages 325-326. People are often reminded of God's promise to Noah when they visit Niagara Falls, because He displays many rainbows there, as seen in one of the photos on page 326. Two aspects of the falls that can't be experienced in pictures are the loud roar of the falling water and the cool spray of the mist. Maybe you can visit the falls someday to experience those for yourself.

The precipice at Niagara Falls is made of about ninety feet of hard limestone. Underneath the limestone is softer shale. The force of the Niagara River erodes the soil and rock that it passes over, so the water becomes rich with minerals. Approximately sixty tons of minerals go over Niagara Falls every minute. These minerals make the river green. Chunks of limestone sometimes fall off the top of the falls because of the force. These chunks of rock fall to the bottom of the falls. Ever since Europeans and their descendants have been observing the falls, its precipice has continued to recede. The rocks of Niagara contain fossils of sponges, fish, coral, and mollusks.

Down river from Niagara Falls, the Niagara River enters Niagara Gorge. Soon the river bends like an elbow. Just before the elbow are rapids. In the elbow is a large basin where the water travels counterclockwise in the Niagara Whirlpool.

The water from Niagara Falls is used by about one million people in America and Canada. It is used for drinking water, for the production of hydroelectric power, and for cooling purposes in industry. In 1950 the two countries agreed on how much water could be diverted from the river to make electricity. During the summer tourist season each year, the power plants divert less water during the daytime to make the waterfalls bigger.

## Natives, Explorers, and Soldiers at Niagara Falls

Native Americans lived in the Niagara region for many years before the falls were first seen by Europeans. Samuel de Champlain and Étienne Brûlé may have seen the falls in their explorations (see Lesson 13). The first European known to describe the falls was Catholic priest Louis Hennepin. Hennepin was a missionary who traveled with the French explorer Rene Robert la Salle. Hennepin wrote about the falls in his 1698 book, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America*. He is also credited with drawing the first illustration of the falls.

Hennepin also discovered St. Anthony Falls on the Mississippi River. A painting of that discovery hangs in the Minnesota State Capitol. He named the Falls of St. Anthony after his patron saint, St. Anthony of Padua. Minneapolis is in Hennepin County and has a Hennepin Avenue. In central Minnesota is Father Hennepin State Park.

The French built a fort on the American side of the falls in 1745. In 1759 the British captured the region. In 1809 Americans founded the town of Manchester, New York. Much fighting took place around Niagara Falls during the War of 1812. The British captured Manchester but returned it to America after the war. In 1848 Manchester was renamed Niagara Falls, New York. The town of Niagara Falls, Ontario, was originally called Elgin and later Clifton. It was named Niagara Falls in 1881.



## Bridges Across Niagara Falls

Three bridges cross the Niagara River near the falls. The Whirlpool Bridge and the Rainbow Bridge cross between the towns of Niagara Falls, New York, and Niagara Falls, Ontario. The Lewiston-Queenston Bridge is nearby. These bridges are an important port of entry between the United States and Canada. A port of entry is a place where people travel between two countries. Besides flights into Kennedy International Airport in New York City, more people cross between the U.S. and Canada on these bridges than at any other point along the border.



1856 Currier and Ives Print of the  
*Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge*

The first bridge across Niagara was a roadway made of oak planks that hung from iron cables. In 1855 it was replaced by the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge that had upper and lower decks. As seen in the print above, trains used the top deck, while pedestrians and carriages used the lower one. Can you imagine walking under those trains? Before the Civil War, many southern slaves escaped slavery by running away to Canada. Many crossed the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge. In 1897 a steel arch bridge was built around and under the suspension bridge. Traffic continued across the suspension bridge while its replacement was under construction. The new bridge was named the Whirlpool Bridge.

The first Falls View Suspension Bridge was completed in 1867. A storm destroyed it in 1889. The second Falls View Suspension Bridge was completed in 1897. It was also known as the Honeymoon Bridge. It sometimes swayed in heavy winds and many worried about its stability. In January of 1938, a severe ice storm hit the area and the bridge fell into the Niagara River. Workers who had been trying to prevent a collapse had left their posts just ten minutes before it fell. Thousands watched it fall, but no one was hurt. The following year King George VI and Queen Elizabeth of England dedicated the site of its replacement. The new bridge built shortly thereafter is called the Rainbow Bridge. It was restored and improved at the turn of the 21st century.

The Lewiston-Queenston Bridge stretches 1,600 feet across the Niagara River. It connects Interstate 190 in Lewiston, New York, with a highway in Queenston, Ontario. This is the world's longest hingeless steel arch bridge. It was completed in 1962 and expanded in 2005. It is a copy of the Rainbow Bridge.

## Niagara Attractions

**Cave of the Wind.** In 1834 a cave was discovered behind Bridal Veil Falls. At first, it was called Aeolus Cave. In Greek mythology Aeolus was the wind god. Guided tours of this cave, which came to be called Cave of the Wind, began in 1841. At the top of page 329 is an illustration that shows people walking down to the cave in 1875. Below it is a photo of the area in 1888. In 1920 the cave suffered a rock fall and became unsafe. The cave was



destroyed in 1954 by a massive rock fall and by the use of dynamite to remove a dangerous overhang.

Tourists still take Cave of the Wind tours even though the cave is gone. They begin on Goat Island, which is accessible by two bridges which carry pedestrians, cars, and tourist trams. First, visitors enter an elevator that takes them down 175 feet into Niagara Gorge. In the summer, you can walk to Hurricane Deck, which is less than twenty feet from the waters of Bridal Veil Falls. The wooden decks taking visitors to Hurricane Deck are taken down each November and reassembled each spring. Otherwise winter weather would destroy them. The winds on Hurricane Deck reach as high as sixty-eight miles an hour, making you feel like you are in a tropical storm. People often see rainbows when they are on the Cave of the Wind tour.

**Journey Behind the Falls.** In 1818 a staircase was built to take visitors to the bottom of Horseshoe Falls. For \$1 visitors could see this “Sheet of Falling Water” attraction. Over the years improvements were made with the addition of elevators and tunnels to help people get to the bottom. Today the attraction is called Journey Behind the Falls.

**Whirlpool Aero Car.** Beginning in 1916, tourists could choose another Niagara adventure. They could ride high above the whirlpool rapids in an aerial cable car. Thirty-five tourists at a time can still climb aboard the same Whirlpool Aero Car and glide over the river, as seen at lower right on page 330.

**Maid of the Mist.** As early as 1818, ferry service was available to take travelers across the Niagara River. In 1846 a steamboat began to ferry them across. It was named *Maid of the Mist*. Since 1846, seven boats have been used, all with the same name. Today these boats carry tourists close to the falls, where they can feel the rising mist. Five pictures of these boats are in this lesson. Can you find all five?

## Tourists and Honeymooners at Niagara Falls

Thousands of couples choose Niagara Falls for their honeymoon, following a tradition begun in the 1800s. The first couple reported to have spent their honeymoon at Niagara was Theodosia Burr and Joseph Alston in 1801. Theodosia was the daughter of Aaron Burr, who served as Vice President with Thomas Jefferson. There is some evidence that Napoleon Bonaparte’s brother and his bride honeymooned there in 1804.

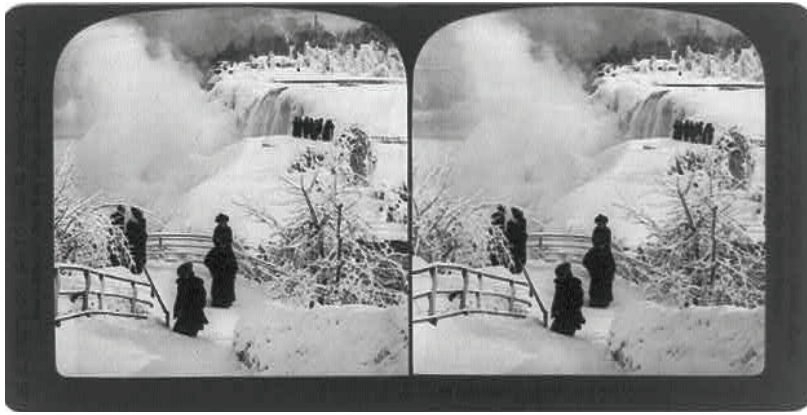
Honeymooners were not the only people who enjoyed visiting Niagara Falls in the 1800s. By the time that James K. Polk served as President of the United States, tourists had been visiting Niagara Falls for several years. One way they learned about the falls was from



*Descent to Cave of the Wind, 1875*



*Cave of the Wind Area, 1888*



Above: Winter Tourists in Early 1900s  
At Right: Harper's Weekly  
Illustrations of Tourists from 1875



The top illustration above shows winter visitors in the early 1900s. Below it are two illustrations of Niagara visitors that appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1875.

Today millions of people visit Niagara Falls each year. On the American side they visit the city of Niagara Falls, New York, and Niagara Falls State Park, which opened in 1885. On the Canadian side they visit Niagara Falls, Ontario, and Queen Victoria Park, which opened in 1888.

## Stunts Over Niagara

In October of 1829, Sam Patch jumped off the top of Horseshoe Falls. He survived the 175-foot leap and came to be called the Yankee Leaper.

Jean François Gravelet was a French acrobat, whose stage name was Charles Blondin. Born in 1824, Blondin began working as an acrobat when he was six years old. Even as a child Blondin was daring and he came to be called the Little Wonder. In 1859 and 1860, Charles Blondin

images artists had created. These hung in homes and public buildings. From 1825 to 1841, Theodore Wright published several editions of *The Northern Traveler*. When writing about Niagara, he said that public accommodations were excellent on both the American and Canadian sides. He said the Niagara River could be crossed safely at any hour of the day by ferry

and noted that each side of the falls had a staircase down to the bottom of the falls. Wright said that throngs of visitors were there during the pleasant seasons of the year. He mentioned that stagecoaches could be hired to transport tourists in the falls area.

When the Erie Canal opened in 1825, people could get from New York City to Buffalo in only ten days. They could then easily travel from Buffalo to nearby Niagara Falls. The Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge, completed in 1855, made it possible for trains to cross the falls. Trains carried people from the east coast to Detroit and Chicago. Many people got to see the falls from their train. The top



Whirlpool Aero Car



walked across Niagara Gorge on a 1,100 foot tightrope! The tightrope was 160 feet above the falls. Over the years Blondin went across the gorge several times. One walk is illustrated at left. Once he pushed a wheelbarrow; once he was blindfolded; once he carried a man on his back; and once he crossed over on stilts.



*Blondin Crossing the Gorge*

In July of 1901, a schoolteacher in Michigan named Annie Edson Taylor read an article about the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. The article described the growing interest in Niagara Falls. Annie's husband had died in the Civil War and she had been moving around the country for many years. She needed money and came up with an outlandish plan. Mrs. Taylor decided she would seek both fortune and fame by doing a spectacular stunt: she would go over Niagara Falls in a barrel!

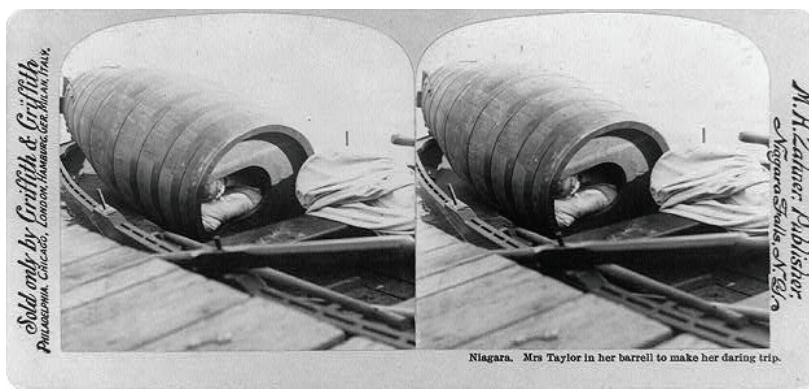
On her birthday, October 24, 1901, Annie Edson Taylor got into a wooden pickle barrel that was five feet tall and three feet across. She nestled among cushions and strapped herself in with a leather harness. See illustration below. The barrel was tied to a small boat which towed her into the Niagara River. There her barrel was cut loose. The rapids tossed her about roughly and then she went over the falls. Amazingly, she survived. After a journey of about twenty minutes, she came ashore.



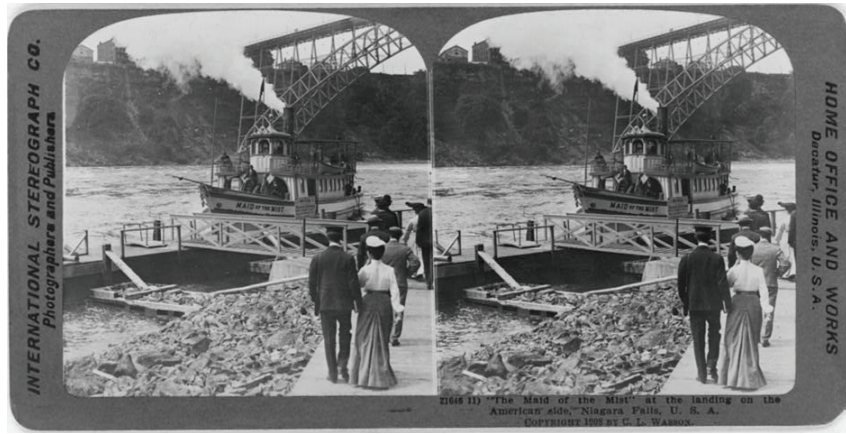
*Diagram of Mrs. Taylor in Her Barrel*

Mrs. Taylor claimed that she was in her forties, but actually she was 63 years old! Annie enjoyed a short time in the spotlight. For a while, people wanted to take photographs of her. See a stereoscopic photo of her below. She received a few requests to speak but she enjoyed no long-term financial success.

Over the next one hundred years, other people tried to go over the falls in various devices. One tried to go in a kayak and one in a jet ski! Only two-thirds of those attempting the plunge survived. Today these stunts are illegal in both the United States and Canada. Anyone who tries to go over the falls faces fines, as much as \$10,000, because he puts rescue workers at risk.



*Original caption reads: "Mrs. Taylor in Her Barrel to Make Her Daring Trip over Niagara Falls"*



Tourists on the Maid of the Mist in 1903 (left) and 1908 (right)

Niagara Falls displays the mighty power of God:

The floods have lifted up, O Lord,  
 The floods have lifted up their voice,  
 The floods lift up their pounding waves.  
 More than the sounds of many waters,  
 Than the mighty breakers of the sea,  
 The Lord on high is mighty.  
 Psalm 93:3-4

## Activities for Lesson 59

**Map Study** – Complete the assignment for Lesson 59 on Map 2 “God’s Wonders” in *Maps of America the Beautiful*.

**Timeline** – In *Timeline of America the Beautiful* next to 1846, write: The *Maid of the Mist* begins service at Niagara Falls.

**Literature** – Read “Over Niagara” in *We the People*, page 58-59, and chapters 5-6 in *Bound for Oregon*.

**Vocabulary** – Write a paragraph in your notebook about an imaginary thrilling adventure that uses all of these words: channel, precipice, diverted, accommodations, gorge.

**Family Activity** – Rehearse and perform the play, “Wild and Wonderful Niagara Falls.” See pages 432-433 for directions.

**Student Workbook or Lesson Review** – If you are using one of these optional books, complete the assignment for Lesson 59.



# John James Audubon, Artist and Naturalist



Summer Red Bird from *Birds of America*



Audubon painted this landscape while in Natchez.

John James Audubon traveled the American frontier painting its wildlife. In 1838 he completed *Birds of America*, a beautiful collection of 435 life-size engravings. Audubon inspired his sons to follow in his footsteps; they also became accomplished nature artists.

Audubon was born in Santo Domingo (now Haiti) in 1785. His father was a French naval officer. His mother worked as a servant. After his mother died, John James went to France to live with his father. He grew up there with his father and his stepmother, who adopted him. During his happy childhood, he collected birds' eggs and nests and drew them. He also studied fencing, geography, and mathematics.

At age eighteen, Audubon came to America to manage Mill Grove, his father's estate near Philadelphia. One of the commercial enterprises on the estate was a lead mine.

At Mill Grove, Audubon found the perfect place to continue his interest in nature and art. Even today the plantation is rich in wildlife. Over 175 species of birds and over four hundred species of plants have been identified there.

The year after Audubon arrived in America, he met and came to love Lucy Bakewell, the daughter of Englishman

William Bakewell, who owned the adjoining estate. After receiving approval from their fathers, Audubon married Lucy in 1808. They moved first to Louisville where Audubon established a general store. They later moved to Henderson, Kentucky. After several successful years in business, the American economy hit a difficult time, and the Audubon



John James Audubon, 1826

family lost all of their possessions. Audubon was even jailed for debt for a short time. Four children were born to the Audubons in Kentucky. Two sons survived to adulthood, Victor Gifford and John Woodhouse.

### In Search of Birds

In 1820, after working for a while as a taxidermist, Audubon took his gun, artist materials, and an assistant and began to travel along the Mississippi River, painting the birds of America. Audubon found many species because millions of birds migrate along the Mississippi flyway. Audubon painted each bird its actual size. His assistant was Joseph Mason, who became expert at painting the plants in Audubon's pictures. Mason worked with Audubon for about two years.

While traveling, Audubon painted chalk portraits to earn money for his venture. While he was away, Lucy contributed to the family income by working as a schoolteacher and tutor. One of the children she tutored was George Bird Grinnell, who later helped to found the first Audubon Society. It was Grinnell who chose the name Audubon for this society dedicated to protecting birds and their habitats.

Audubon spent time in Natchez, Mississippi, painting birds in the area (see Lesson 53). While there he taught at two schools and painted the landscape pictured on page 333. The original oil painting of this landscape hung at Melrose Plantation in Natchez for almost one hundred years. For a while, Lucy was able to join her husband in Natchez. They enrolled their sons in school there. It was in Natchez that Audubon received instruction in oil painting from traveling artist John Stein. Audubon used a variety of art materials to produce his paintings, including pastels, chalk, graphite, oil paint, egg whites, and more.

Though some birds that became part of *Birds of America* were painted in Natchez and other sites along the Mississippi, Audubon had many more places to go before his project was completed. He traveled as far south as the Florida Keys, as far north as Labrador in Canada, and as far west as Texas. While working on his paintings of birds, Audubon took notes about their characteristics and about his experiences in the wilderness.

### In Search of a Printer

Audubon tried in 1824 to get the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia to help him publish engravings of his paintings. He was turned down. He went to England in 1826 with the paintings he had completed thus far. He displayed 250 paintings in England and in Edinburgh, Scotland. He found great success. People liked his life-size bird portraits and

his descriptions of life in the American wilderness. In London he found an engraver for *Birds of America*. The engraver agreed to reproduce Audubon's paintings as hand-colored engravings. While in Great Britain, Audubon partnered with a Scottish ornithologist (a scientist who studies birds) to write life histories of the species that Audubon drew.



*Audubon in the Wilderness*

Customers did not receive the book all at one time. Instead, they purchased subscriptions. In 1830 the U.S. House of Representatives bought a subscription. That same year, Audubon dined at the White House with President Jackson.

Audubon continued to travel and paint. His son Victor accompanied him, while his son John stayed in England overseeing the printing and selling of the series. Victor and John painted the picture of their father at left.

In 1838 John James Audubon published the last engraving in the *Birds of America* series. Most customers purchased complete sets, which they received in eighty-seven installments of five hand-colored engravings each. Many of Audubon's paintings in *Birds of America* included more than one bird. When he completed his 435 life-size paintings of America's birds, he had included 1,065 birds from 489 species.

Audubon's prints are remarkable. He positioned the birds as they are found in creation. Unlike other nature artists of the day, he painted them in their natural surroundings. They are more than nature illustrations; they are works of art. The original prints of *Birds of America* bring large sums when they are auctioned today. Of the just over two hundred complete sets he sold, many are still intact.

## Fame and Fortune

*Birds of America* brought Audubon financial success and fame. He and Lucy were able to purchase Minnie's Land, a thirty-five acre estate along the Hudson River in what is now upper Manhattan. Newspapers wrote about him, he gave lectures, and he socialized with well-known people. Between 1831 and 1839, he published the notes he had taken while drawing the birds of America. These notes were published in a five-volume set called *Ornithological Biography*. Between 1839 and 1843, a smaller version of *Birds of America* was also printed.

For six months in 1843, Audubon and his son John explored the Missouri River valley to research North American mammals. Audubon and his two sons completed the paintings for this project and published *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*. James Bachman, a minister, long-time family friend, and amateur naturalist, wrote its text. This work was printed by a process called lithography. After printing, the pages were hand-colored. It was one of the first books of its kind to be printed by that method in the United States.

For the last nine years of his life, Audubon and his wife made their home at Minnie's Land. Audubon died in 1851 at age sixty-five.



John James Audubon State Park in Kentucky has the largest collection of Audubon artifacts in the world. Audubon's works are found in many museums, including the National Gallery of Art. Audubon's first home in America, Mill Grove in Pennsylvania, is now managed by the National Audubon Society and is open to the public. Lucy Audubon sold her husband's original paintings for *Birds of America* to the New York Historical Society, which still owns them. Notice the examples at right, below, and on page 333.



Carolina Turtle-Dove

In the 1839 introduction to the smaller version of *Birds of America*, John James Audubon wrote that he never could cease "to admire and to study with zeal and the most heartfelt reverence, the wonderful productions of an Almighty Creator." Audubon helped people learn about and appreciate some of God's most beautiful creatures. Jesus taught:

Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow,  
nor reap nor gather into barns,  
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.  
Are you not worth much more than they?  
Matthew 6:26

### Activities for Lesson 60



Ivory-billed Woodpecker

**Thinking Biblically** – Jesus taught about about God's love by pointing out birds. Copy Matthew 6:26 into your notebook.

**Timeline** – In *Timeline of America the Beautiful* next to 1838, write: John James Audubon completes *Birds of America*.

**Literature** – Read "From Audubon's Journal" in *We the People*, page 60, and chapters 7-8 in *Bound for Oregon*.

**Creative Writing** – Go outside and observe a particular object of God's creation. It could be a tree, flower, bird, butterfly, or pet. In your notebook, write one or two paragraphs describing it in detail.

**Student Workbook or Lesson Review** – If you are using one of these optional books, complete the assignment for Lesson 60. If you are using the Lesson Review, take the quiz for Unit 12.





## Family Activity for Unit 12

# Wild and Wonderful Niagara Falls

In this activity, you will produce a short play about Niagara Falls. Your audience will learn about Niagara Falls and some of the notable events that have happened there. Your play can have one performer or many; give parts to as many people as you have participating. Ask someone to be the narrator and read the lines. We have provided the lines for the play and some staging instructions. You fill in the rest! Think about how to make your play run smoothly and entertain and educate your audience. Practice several times so everyone knows what to do, including a bow at the end. You might want to make tickets and programs. Even if you have only one person in the audience, put on a great play!



### Stage Instructions

1. Welcome! While this line is read, an actor sprays the audience with a light mist of water from a spray bottle. An actor dressed as a tour guide or tourist smiles and enthusiastically holds up a sign that says “This way to Niagara Falls!”

2. First Recording: One or two actors, dressed as explorers walk around the stage silently looking, pointing, and exclaiming. One of them pulls out a pad and pencil and furiously writes on the paper.

3. Bridges: One or more actors walks across the stage, pretending to walk on the lower deck of the suspension bridge. They wear helmets and cover their heads with their hands, walking in a crouched, fearful position, continually looking up with frightened faces.

4. Honeymooners: Someone dressed up as a bride or a groom (or two people dressed as both) walks across the stage carrying suitcases. They look happy, shy, and embarrassed.

### Narrator's Lines

1. Welcome to Niagara Falls! Niagara Falls is between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario on the border between Canada and the United States of America. The beautiful falls sends 194,940 cubic feet of gushing, rushing water 188 feet over the edge every second!

2. Louis Hennepin made the first known description and drawing of the falls. He visited Niagara with French explorer René Robert Cavelier and wrote about it in his book *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America* published in 1698.

3. The first bridge across Niagara Falls was made of oak planks hung from iron cables. The first bridge was replaced by the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge in 1855. The suspension bridge had an upper deck for trains and a lower deck for carriages and pedestrians.

4. Niagara Falls is a popular destination for honeymooners. This tradition goes back to the early the 1800s. Aaron Burr's daughter and Napoleon's brother are reported to be some of the first Niagara Falls honeymooners.

5. Hurricane Deck: One or more people stand as if they are being blown by furious winds and can barely remain standing. Meanwhile, they point and silently admire the scenery.

6. *Maid of the Mist*: One or more people hold a donut-shaped life-preserver (cut out of poster board) that says MAID OF THE MIST in large black letters. All of them duck under umbrellas and rock back and forth as if they are on the deck of a boat.

7. Jumpers and Divers: One or more people stand in a silly diving position, wearing inflatable floaters, goggles, and towels wrapped around their waists.

8. Annie Edson Taylor: Someone stands in a large empty garbage can in a dress, carrying a purse, with a pillow tied on his or her head. The actor looks scared and keeps his or her eyes closed.

9. Charles Blondin: A rope or jump rope is laid across the floor. An actor walks across it, gingerly taking one step at a time and wobbling precariously, all the while waving to the audience with confidence.

10. Come see Niagara Falls! An actor walks across the tightrope, this time wearing a blindfold. He or she holds a sign facing the audience that reads "Follow me to Niagara Falls!"

5. Platforms that allow visitors to reach Hurricane Deck are built every spring and removed every November. On Hurricane Deck, visitors can stand less than 20 feet from the waters of Bridal Veil Falls, which is part of Niagara Falls. At Hurricane Deck, winds can reach 68 miles per hour!

6. In 1846 a steamboat began taking tourists across the Niagara River. It was called *Maid of the Mist*. Since then, seven different boats have been used, all called *Maid of the Mist*. On the boat, visitors can get close to the bottom of the falls where they get drenched from the rising mist.

7. In October 1829, Sam Patch jumped over Niagara Falls and survived! He earned the nickname "Yankee Leaper." People have tried going over the falls in various ways, including a kayak and a jet ski. Today, going over the falls is illegal in Canada and the United States, and an attempt could earn you a \$10,000 fine.

8. In 1901 a Civil War widow named Annie Edson Taylor who had fallen on hard times went over Niagara Falls in a barrel, hoping to gain attention and make money from her fame. She claimed to be 40 years old, but was really 63! She fixed up a wooden pickle barrel with accessories suited for the stunt, and over the falls she went. She survived the exciting journey, but didn't make much money for her trouble.

9. Charles Blondin got started in the acrobat trade when he was only six years old. In 1859 he made his first trip across Niagara Falls—not on a boat or a bridge, but on a tightrope! His tightrope was 1,100 feet long and hung 160 feet above the falls. That was the first of many trips across the falls. On his various trips across the falls, Blondin pushed a wheelbarrow, carried a man on his back, and walked on stilts. Once he crossed blindfolded!

10. We invite you to see for yourself one of America the Beautiful's most famous attractions! Catch the mist, hear the roar, feel the wind, and see a rainbow! THE END





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