

# Frontier Fabricators

## Traveling Trunk

Lesson Plans, Grades K-5

**Central Texas Women and Children in the 1800s**



409 East 5th Street

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# Trunk Contents

## Lesson Plans

- Tools of the Trade
- Quilting
- Frontier Toys

## Learning Artifacts

- Coffee Mill
- Drop Spindle
- Butter Churn
- Quilts
- Corn Husk Dolls
- Food Chopper
- Butter Mold

## Books

- The Quilt-Block History of Pioneer Days
- Pioneer Crafts
- Stitchin' and Pullin': A Gee's Bend Quilt by Patricia McKissack
- The Quilt Story by Tony Johnston
- Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt by Deborah Hopkinson
- The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco
- Pioneer Children On the Journey West by Emmy E. Werner
- Easy - to - Make Old - Fashioned Toys by Jr. Eugene F. Provenzo

- A Pioneer Sampler: The Daily Life of a Pioneer Family in 1840 by Barbara Greenwood
- Texas Toys and Games: Publication of the Texas Folklore Society XLVIII edited by Frances Edward Abernathy

## Lesson Plan Resources

- Cotton Quilting Squares
- Needles
- Thread
- Quilt Pattern Matching Game
- 8 ounce jar
- Cheesecloth squares
- Tissue Paper
- Sewing Pins
- Corks
- Toy material container
- Modeling Clay
- Skewers
- Toy Material Bag: wool, sticks, buttons,
- Frontier Toys: marbles, hoops, doll, top
- Markers
- Buttons
- 7 Artifact Cards
- Artifact Question Cards

# Introduction

## Goal

Often, early Texas settlers are portrayed as rugged cowboys with larger than life hats and mustaches. However, moving to new lands and setting up homesteads and ranches required hard work from everyone in the family, including the children! The Frontier Fabricators Trunk explores the often overlooked roles of women and children on the Texas frontier through examination of household tools, clothing, and even the toys that were fabricated to entertain children on the frontier. Just as today, play was an important part of life for children in early Texas. Everyone contributed to the success of the family as they embarked on their journey to create a new life on the Texas Frontier.

## Background Information

The early settlers in Texas came from many different places. As a matter of fact, Texas has had 6 different flags fly over parts of the current territory of Texas: Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States of America. Even before early Spanish settlers arrived in the 1500s, Texas had been inhabited by people from before 12,000 BCE. These Native American Tribes were still living in Texas as Spain attempted to create a new colony there. Many settlers and Native Americans died during this time of conflict as the Spanish were moving into territory that was already inhabited by Native Peoples. The Spanish sent missionaries along with the Conquistadors to attempt to convert Native Peoples to Christianity and indoctrinate them into Spanish culture.

Eventually, this new land called Mexico also fought for independence from Spain, and won it in 1821. At that time, Texas became a largely unsettled territory of Mexico and conflict still existed between new settlers and the Native Americans who lived there. Mexico encouraged settlers to come from the United States and new settlers began arriving from the United States in 1824 with Stephen F. Austin. Susanna Dickinson and her new husband arrived during this time period in 1831. She was born into a pioneer family and possessed many of the skills needed to survive in her new environment including cooking, sewing, and housekeeping. Most women and their families on the Texas frontier during this time period did not have access to commercial cloth, dye, and other domestic supplies. They had to be innovative and industrious, making their own items whenever possible from the materials they had available locally. This trunk contains items and lesson plans to explore how families on the frontier constructed needed items such as clothing, blankets, meals, and even toys!

**VISIT** the Susanna Dickinson Museum to learn more about her life and adventures on the Texas frontier in the 19th Century!

# Lesson Plan 1

## Tools of the Trade

Just like any other job, settlers on the Texas frontier had specialized tools for the work they needed to accomplish. They needed to make many of the items needed for survival such as food, clothing, and shelter. They sometimes took supplies and animals with them on their long journeys to new homes in Texas. But often, they needed to gather supplies from new and often unfamiliar surroundings by hunting animals, gathering wild plants, finding water sources, and planting crops. Many women were in charge of helping their families find or make all of the items they needed to survive. Even children were expected to help prepare food, sew clothing, tend animals, and provide care for other younger children in the family. Although children had responsibility to help their parents, play was still an important part of childhood, just like today. However, many toys had to be handmade from readily available materials such as fabric scraps and wood. Store bought items were very expensive, and many families heading out to make a new life in Texas could not afford to buy things from stores. They had to make items themselves whenever possible! This lesson plan explores the different household tools that families used to make food, clothing, and even shelter.

**Time required:** 60-90 minutes

**Subject Areas: Social Studies:** History, Economics, Government, Culture

## Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

1. Identify different tools that women and children on the Texas Frontier used to fabricate needed or wanted items such as food, clothing, and toys.
2. Gain experience using some of these tools such as a butter churn and thread and needle
3. Analyze, categorize, and compare historic tools with those tools we use today.

## Steps

1. Begin lesson by placing learning artifacts on table or assigning each artifact to a group.
2. Ask students to analyze their artifact. They can use the provided question cards to help them along in this process.
3. Ask each group to share their findings and ideas.
4. Have groups come up and get the artifact card that belongs with each item (each card will have a matching picture). They can compare their findings with the information on the card. This a great time to discuss which items we might still use today, if we have something similar, or if the items are no longer in use. Economics, culture, and government all influence what items we need as household tools!

**To access artifact analysis examples on video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjXrteDgkEA>

# Lesson Plan 1 Activity—Making Butter!

## You will need:

- 2/3 cup cold heavy whipping cream (Teacher supplied)
- 1 1-cup canning jar with lid and ring (supplies in trunk-please keep jar)
- 1 square of cheesecloth (supplies in trunk-please keep square of cloth)

## Time: 15-20 minutes

1. Pour cream into the jar and screw on the lid. Shake jar until butter forms a soft lump, 15 to 20 minutes. Continue to shake until buttermilk separates out of the lump and the jar contains a solid lump of butter and liquid buttermilk.
2. Place cloth over mouth of jar and strain out the buttermilk, leaving the solid butter. Rinsing butter with cold water to remove more buttermilk will make butter last longer.
3. Salt and other flavorings can be added to taste. Remove the lump of butter and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate until needed.

You made your own butter from heavy cream! On the Texas frontier, sometimes there were no places to buy food near where people lived, so they had to make their own food. Making butter from milk collected from a cow was a chore that children would often help with. Food had to be grown for the cow, it had to be milked daily, and the milk had to be carried in and stored or consumed by the family. Extra items such as cream and butter also needed to be made from the milk.

## To access lesson on video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKMw4iAksmA>

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Kindergarten: **§113.11**-2a, 2b, 5b, 6a, 6b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 11a, 11b, 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b, 13c, 14a, 14b, 14c

Grade 1: **§113.12**-6b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 9c, 10a, 10b, 16a, 16b, 16c, 17a, 17b, 17c

Grade 2: **§113.13**-3a, 3b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 10c, 17b, 18a, 18b, 18e

Grade 3: **§113.14**-2a, 2b, 2c, 3c, 4b, 7a, 7b, 7c, 14a, 16b

Grade 4: **§113.15**-2a, 3a, 3b, 3d, 7a, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 10b, 12a, 12b, 12c, 12d, 12e, 12f, 13c, 14b,

Grade 5: **§113.16**-1a, 4c, 4f, 4g, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 10a, 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b, 13c, 13d, 13e

# Lesson Plan 2

## Quilting

One item many Texas settlers needed in abundance was quilts. Many early settlers, such as Susanna Dickinson, often did not live close to stores or could not afford the cost of buying already constructed items of clothing, bedding, or other household items. They needed to fabricate these items on their own with the materials they had available. Often, even the material used to sew clothing or blankets needed to be fabricated from plant or animal fibers such as wool and flax grown by the settlers. Even having materials to grow the wool and flax could sometimes be a luxury. If settlers had no sheep or farm established yet, they were often limited to using leather harvested from local animals to make clothing. Settlers often were in charge of the entire fabrication process: growing a crop or raising sheep, harvesting the plants or shearing sheep, turning the raw fibers into thread, weaving the thread into material, and then sewing the material into a finished product. A finished quilt represented quite a lot of hard work and planning as well as being a much needed source of protection and warmth! Quilt designs were developed to represent many different and important moments in the settler's lives such as building their first home, weddings, and even births. With all the work that was involved in the making of quilts, women and families would often get together in their communities by going to a quilting bee. At this event, all the women and their families would gather together in order to help finish a quilt more quickly. These events were a time for families to get together and help each other with chores, have a communal meal, and even enjoy music and dancing. Even with all the work to be done, there was still time to have fun together!

**Time required:** 60-90 minutes

**Subject Areas:** Mathematics, Social Studies, Fine Arts

## Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

1. Design a simple 9 square quilt pattern.
2. Use the pattern to measure fabric squares.
3. Use tools, pattern, and material to fabricate a quilt sample.

## Steps

1. Begin lesson by talking briefly about the importance of quilts to Texas settlers in the 1800s.
2. Quilts were so important to early settlers that the designs they sewed into them had special meaning and reflected what they saw and experienced in their lives. Have students help you match the quilt design cards with the Quilt Matching Game and/or read one of the quilt stories from the trunk!

**To access quilt story on video:** [https://www.dropbox.com/s/yecz3ggq2r16o2n/Sweet%20Clara%20and%20the%20Freedom%20Quilt\\_1.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/yecz3ggq2r16o2n/Sweet%20Clara%20and%20the%20Freedom%20Quilt_1.mp4?dl=0)

## Lesson Plan 2 Activity— Crazy Quilting!

### You will need:

Sewing needle and thread (supplies in trunk)

Fabric pieces (supplies in trunk)

Scissors (supplies in trunk)

Pencil, ruler, and tissue paper (supplies in trunk)

Optional: cotton batting, darning needle, yarn

### Time: 40-60 minutes

1. Decide how to arrange your colors by drawing a large square and dividing it into 9 squares. The easiest design is a checkerboard.
2. Make a sewing pattern by drawing a 4 inch square on a piece of paper. Tissue paper works very well for this. Using this size of square will give you a finished quilt size of 12 inches x 12 inches.
3. Practice threading a needle and stitches in *Pioneer Crafts* book from pages 6-7.
4. Sew squares together as illustrations in *Pioneer Crafts* demonstrate on pages 24-25.
5. Allow children to take these home, combine all samples into a class quilt, or follow remaining instructions to finish quilt on pages 24-25 in *Pioneer Crafts*.

Children should all have their own Nine Patch quilt sample. Finished materials may be kept by their fabricators! Children can choose designs that reflect their own lives by requesting they bring old fabric from home before lesson day if educator desires. This is a great opportunity for children to represent their families and experiences in a functional piece of art just like pioneers did.

### To access digital pages from Pioneer Crafts: (next page)

### Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Kindergarten: §111.2-1a, 1c, 6a, 6f, 7a §113.11-5b, 6a, 6b, 6c, 12a, 12b, §117.102-1b, 2a, 2b, 2c,

Grade 1: §111.3-1a, 1c, 6c, 6f, 7a §113.12-3a, 6b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 8b, 9c §117.105-1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3b

Grade 2: §111.4-1a, 1c, 3a, 3b, 8a §113.13-2a, 2b, 7c, 7d, 10a, 10b, 10c §117.108-1a, 1b, 2c, 3a, 3b

Grade 3: §111.5-1a, 1c, 6a, 9b §113.14-2a, 2b, 2c, 3c, 4b, 7a, 7b, 12a, 12b, 15a §117.111-1a, 1b, 2a, 2c

Grade 4: §111.6-1a, 1c, 6b, 6c §113.15-2a, 9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 12a, 12b §117.114-1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a

Grade 5: §111.7-1a, 1c §113.16-1a, 4c, 4f, 4g, 8a, 8b, 9a, 10a, 10b, 13a, 13c §117.117-1a, 2a, 2b, 3a

## SEWING HINTS

Pioneers sewed their own clothes and toys. To help you sew some of the crafts in this book, refer to these handy hints whenever you need to.



### Threading a needle

- 1 Cut a piece of thread about the length of your arm.



- 2 Wet one end of the thread in your mouth and poke it through the eye of the needle. Pull the thread until it is double.



- 3 Knot the end of the threads by wrapping them around your index finger, then rolling them off with your thumb.



### Running stitches

- 1 Push the needle up through the fabric, and pull it until the knot is against the underside of the fabric. If you are using heavy fabric or several layers, you might need a thimble on your middle finger to help you push the needle through.



- 2 Poke the needle down, then bring it up about 1 cm (1/2 in.) along. Draw the thread through. Continue to sew tiny stitches in a straight row.



- 3 To finish, sew two or three stitches on top of the last one. Cut the thread.



### Overcast stitches

- 1 Push the needle up through the fabric and pull until the knot is against the underside of the fabric.



- 2 Bring the needle over the edge of the fabric and push it up through from the underside again. Keep the stitches close together and even.



- 3 To finish, sew two or three stitches on top of the last one. Cut the thread.



## Crazy quilt

Log cabins were cold and drafty, so beds needed many blankets. Since fabric was hard to come by, pioneers saved even tiny pieces. They sewed the scraps together to make blankets. Because the patches came in a jumble of colours, the quilts were called crazy quilts. You can quilt a doll's blanket or a cushion cover.



### YOU WILL NEED

- a pencil, ruler and paper
- sewing pins
- fabric scraps in several colours
- scissors
- a needle and thread
- stuffing (extra layers of fabric, cotton batting or polyester batting)
- a darning needle
- yarn

- 1 Decide how to arrange your colours by drawing a large square and dividing it into nine squares. The easiest design is a checkerboard.



- 2 To make a sewing pattern, draw a 10-cm (4-in.) square on a piece of paper. This will give you a finished quilt about 30 cm x 30 cm (12 in. x 12 in.).



- 3 Pin the pattern to your fabric and cut out the square. Cut eight more in the colours needed for your design.



- 4 Sew the first three squares together as shown, making each seam 0.5 cm (1/4 in.) wide. Repeat for the second and third rows.



- 5 Sew the three rows together. Ask an adult to iron the seams flat, if necessary. This is the front of your quilt.



- 6 To make the back, cut a square the same size as the front. Place the front and back, together with right sides facing each other. Sew around three sides 0.5 cm (1/4 in.) from the edges.



- 7 Cut a square of stuffing 1 cm (1/2 in.) smaller around than the quilt cover. Place the stuffing on the back square of your quilt and pin it in place. Turn the quilt right side out.



- 8 Take out the pins and use them to pin through the front, the stuffing and the back. Turn the bottom edges inside and sew with overcast stitches.



- 9 To hold the stuffing in place, thread a darning needle with yarn. At the corner of each square, stitch through the front and back covers. Draw the yarn through and cut it, leaving two 1-cm (1/2-in.) tails. Tie them in knots and remove the pins.





# Lesson Plan 3

## Frontier Toys

Children all over the world love toys and have been making and playing with them for thousands of years. There are so many different types of toys: dolls, figurines, balls, sticks, hoops, board games, and many more. Today, toys can be acquired by going to a store, ordering online, or maybe making your own. However, settler families on the Texas frontier often had no access to stores or even sometimes the raw materials needed to make toys. Because of this, toys were fashioned from available resources and creatively fabricated from leftover items that a family might not need any longer. Living in Texas in the 1800s could be rough and involved lots of hard work, even from children. Children were expected to help with many of the household chores such as gathering eggs, tending to animals, sewing, preparing food, farming, and even tending the younger children. Though when all the chores were finished, children created many different games and toys to amuse themselves on the frontier. This lesson plan explores different types of toys that children might have played with on the Texas frontier in the 19th Century. This is a great lesson to initiate discussion about human needs, supply and demand, customs, changing technology, and problem solving.

**Time required:** 30-90minutes

**Subject Areas:** Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts

## Learning Objectives

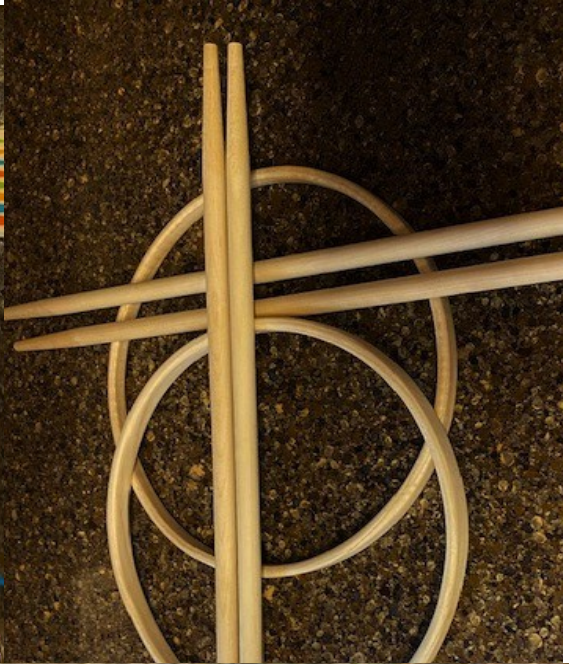
After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

1. Name different types of toys that children fabricated and played with in the 19th Century.
2. Name different materials that were often available to 19th Century frontier children.
3. Use materials and follow directions to create their own balancing toy.

## Steps

1. Begin lesson by passing out “toy” materials from trunk.
2. Have children get into groups or individually come up with different ideas for toys that could be constructed from the available materials and discuss as a group.
3. Show images of popular toys that children might have played with on the frontier. How are some of them similar to toys we have today? What types of toys are available today? What types of materials and technology do we use to make toys today? How does playing with toys then and today help children prepare for adulthood?

**To access digital images of toys:** (next page)



# Lesson Plan 3 Activity— Build Your Own Acrobat!

## You will need:

A Round pre-notched Toothpick (supplies in trunk)

A bottle cork (supplies in trunk)

Markers (supplies in trunk)

2 Skewers (Supplies in trunk)

Modelling clay (supplies in trunk)

A piece of string 3 feet long (supplies in trunk)

## Time: 20-30 minutes

1. Push pointed end of toothpick into bottom of cork. The notched end should stick out about 1 inch. This is the pivot .
2. Use markers to turn your cork into an acrobat...may draw clothing, face, hair, etc.
3. Stick skewers into each side of the cork at an angle as shown in *Pioneer Crafts* on page 9. The angles must be the same on each side.
4. Shape the modelling clay into two balls (they must be the same size) and stick one onto the end of each skewer.
5. Balance the acrobat on the tip of your finger by its pivot. If the acrobat is not properly balanced, this is the time to adjust the balls and/or skewers. Make adjustments until the acrobat is balanced.
6. Once the acrobat is balanced, 2 children may each hold an end of the string and raise or lower it to make their acrobats “walk”.

If needed, refer to illustrations as shown in *Pioneer Crafts* on pages 8-9. Finished/used materials may be kept by their fabricators.

## To access lesson on video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQmhnOcsoAw&feature=youtu.be>

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Kindergarten: §112.11-5a §113.11-6a, 6b, 6c, 11a, 11b, 12a, 12b, 13c §117.102-1a, 1b, 2c, 3a, 3c

Grade 1: §112.12- 5a, 5c §113.12- 3a, 6c, 7a, 7b, 9a, 9b, 9c, 16a §117.105- 1a, 1b, 2a, 2c, 3a, 3c, 4a

Grade 2: §112.13- 5c, 5d, 6c §113.13- 2a, 7c, 7d, 10a, 10b, 10c, 17a, 17b §117.108- 1a, 1b, 2b, 2c, 4a

Grade 3: §112.14- 5a, 6a, 6b, 6c §113.14- 2a, 2b, 3a, 3c, 7a, 7b §117.111- 1a, 1b, 2a, 2c,