

CHESTNUT SQUARE

HISTORIC VILLAGE

Bringing History Alive Outreach Programs

Delivering the Old West by Butterfield Stagecoach

Target Audience:

4th graders nearing the end of their Texas state history curriculum.

Overview:

The Butterfield stagecoach delivered mail from the St. Louis to San Francisco and back again from 1857 through 1861. The Butterfield route was a “u” shape across the country and dipped down to Sherman, TX. McKinney was founded in 1848 with a population of 35. By 1874 when the courthouse was built the population was over 1,500. These early settlers to Texas came predominately from the eastern states and would want to communicate back to their families that they had arrived, about their trip and about their new homeland. Without a phone or mail service, their only option was the stagecoach. In this outreach program, 4th graders will write a letter back “home” describing their trip and their new life in McKinney, Texas. The Butterfield stagecoach will arrive at their school to deliver letters from other 4th graders and to pick up letters from their school to deliver at the next school. Students will learn about the stagecoach and what it was like to ride the Butterfield route.

Goal:

Students will be able to describe the journey to Texas in the 1850’s, what the McKinney area was like during that time period, what pioneer life was like and how the stagecoach was used to deliver mail.

Objectives:

1. Students will communicate their knowledge of 1850’s immigration to Texas through their letters back “home”.

2. Students will communicate their knowledge of 1850's McKinney through their letters back "home".
3. Students will communicate what their life would have been like in 1850's McKinney through their letter back "home."
4. Students will evaluate others' descriptions of their journey, McKinney and their daily lives in McKinney in the 1850's through the letters they receive.
5. Students will learn about the Butterfield Stagecoach, the stagecoach route and the stagecoach role in westward migration through a presentation and experiencing the stagecoach.

Pre-Work:

A teacher outline and materials will be available for download at www.chestnutsquare.org. The teacher will set the stage for the students that they are to pretend it is 1857 and they are new settlers to McKinney. They arrived in McKinney within the past six months and are writing a letter back to their family describing their trip and their new life in Texas. The letter will be picked up by the stagecoach and taken to their family. Students will be provided with a piece of parchment paper to write their letters.

Resources:

Students can visit Chestnut Square Historic Village to see examples of an early pioneer home (the 1854 Faires House) and a stagecoach inn (1864 Taylor Inn).

Students may want to use the following resources to research Texas pioneer life:

Strother, Mary Carole. Collin McKinney Texas Patriot and Statesman. McKinney, TX. McKinney Matters Publishing, 2007.

Hall, Capt. Roy F. and Helen Hall. Collin County: Pioneering in North Texas. First Edition. Heritage Books, 1994.

"History of Collin County Texas: An Educational Guide for Students and Teachers." McKinney: The Heritage Guild of Collin County.

Students can research the Butterfield stagecoach line at the following websites:

<http://knol.google.com/k/butterfield-stagecoach-overland-mail-co#>

<http://www.bridgeporttxhistorical.org/Pages/Butter%20Field%20Overland%20Mail%20Co.html>

Stagecoach Visit:

The Butterfield stagecoach, owned by Ben Buckwalter, can visit three schools per day. If schools are within 2-3 miles of each other, the stagecoach will run between the schools. For longer distances, the stagecoach will be trucked to a mile or so away from the school it is visiting.

Letters from the last school on the daily line will be picked up the night before the visits. Those letters will be delivered to the first school of the day. Letters from the first school will be delivered to the second school and letters from the second school will be delivered to the third school. The stagecoach will leave with a "fake" bag of letters from the third school of the day.

A volunteer from Chestnut Square Historic Village will give a brief overview of the Butterfield stagecoach and the stagecoach route to the children outside the school before the stagecoach arrives. The students will line up at the entrance of the school to see the stagecoach arrive. It will pull up to the entrance and the mail bag will be handed to one of the teachers. Another teacher will deliver the new mailbag to Mr. Buckwalter for delivery.

Students will be able to step up into the stagecoach and look at the interior to get a feeling of what the ride was like. After all the students have looked inside the stagecoach, each class will assemble for a picture with the stagecoach.

Each student will receive a worksheet about the stagecoach with a word search on the back, a free tour pass to Chestnut Square Historic Village and a class picture in front of the stagecoach. (Pictures will be e-mailed to teachers).

TEKS Objectives:

This outreach program fulfills the following 4th grade TEKS:

113.615 (a) (2) To support the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills, the use of a variety of rich primary and secondary material such as documents, biographies, novels, speeches, letters, poetry, songs and artworks is encouraged. Where appropriate, local topics should be included. Motivating resources are available from museums, historical sites, presidential libraries and local and state preservation societies.

113.615 (b) (10) (B) explain the economic activities early immigrants to Texas used to meet their needs and wants.

113.615 (b) (12) Economics. The student understands patterns of work and economic activities in Texas. The student is expected to:

113.615 (b) (12) (A) explain how people in different regions of Texas earn their living, past and present through a subsistence economy and providing goods and services;

113.615 (b) (12) (B) explain how geographic factors such as climate, transportation, and natural resources have influenced the location of economic activities in Texas

113.615 (b) (12) (C) analyze the effects of exploration, immigration, migration and limited resources on the economic development and growth of Texas

113.615 (b) (12) (E) explain how developments in transportation and communication have influenced economic activities in Texas; and

113.615 (b) (13) Economics. The student understands how Texas, the United States, and other parts of the world are economically interdependent. The student is expected to:

113.615 (b) (13) (A) identify ways in which technological changes in areas such as transportation and communication have resulted in increased interdependence among Texas, the United States and the world

113.615 (b) (21) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources including electronic technology.

113.615 (b) (22) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral and visual forms.

Cost:

The cost per school for "Delivering the Old West by Butterfield Stagecoach" is \$350. This price includes the delivery of letters to each school and students sitting in the stagecoach.

Student rides in the stagecoach may be added to the outreach program for an additional fee of \$100 per school.

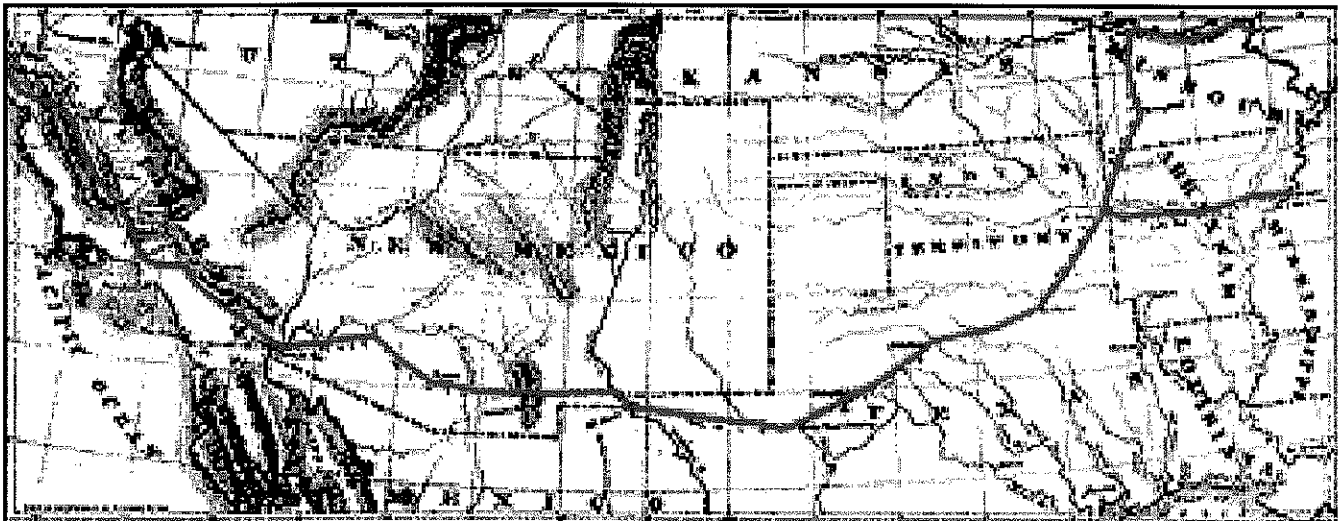
Butterfield Overland Stage



In Texas, the Butterfield Overland Mail service was created by Congress on March 3, 1857. It operated until March 30, 1861. The route that it followed in our area took it through the towns of Gainesville, Denton, Pilot Point and Sherman.

Butterfield Overland Stage began rolling on September 15, 1858, when the twice-weekly mail service began. A Butterfield Overland Concord stagecoach would start from San Francisco, California and another would start from Tipton, Missouri. They would travel over the better roads on a southern route that skirted the Rocky Mountains and the heavy winter snows by traveling through Texas, southern New Mexico Territory and southern California. Each run averaged 2,800 miles and had to be completed in 25 days or less to qualify for the \$600,000 government grant for mail service. There was a lack of water and the danger of hostile Indians to worry about on each run.

The coaches were to carry the mail as their first priority, but they would accept passengers, too. The cost for the entire route was \$200 and each passenger was allowed to bring twenty-five pounds of luggage, two blankets and a canteen. The coaches traveled at breakneck speed twenty-four hours a day; there were no stops for bed and breakfast--only the hurried intervals at the station houses when they changed horses. Travelers were then offered meals of bread, coffee, cured meat and, on occasion, beans.



Map shows the Original Stage Coach Route of the Butterfield Overland Mail Company

Missouri to California

