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Title: How Illinois Flipped Upside Down: Reasons for the Current Population Distribution

Overview:

As a whole group, the class will view maps of Illinois' population changes from 1830 – 1970. Using only the visual representations and their prior knowledge, students will speculate as to what motivating factors caused the population changes shown for each decade. With a partner, students will support or modify their explanations for a specific decade using literature on Illinois' population and social geography.

Grade Level: 7th and 8th grade

Time Needed: 2 class periods, 40 minutes each period

Illinois Learning Standards:

Geography IL Learning Standards

17.C.3c Analyze how human processes influence settlement patterns including migration and population growth

17.D.3a Explain how/why spatial patterns of settlement change over time

Language Arts

1B.3a Preview material, make predictions, relate reading to other sources

Objectives:

Students will describe population patterns of Illinois from statehood to 1970

Students will identify motivating factors causing the population changes of Illinois

Students will read nonfiction writing and correlate written word to visual representations

Materials:

Teacher

Large wall map of Illinois

Overheads of population changes by decade

Color overhead of Illinois' principal rivers, canals, lakes

Color overhead of Illinois railroads 1855

Color overhead of significant Illinois cities

Color overhead of 1810 – 1820 IL Prairies

Student

2 column worksheet with Illinois population changes by decade

Historic Population Development, Chapter 5

Movement by Norman Moline and James Schebler

Advanced Preparation:

Read background material, make copies of overheads and student worksheets.

Introducing the Activity:

Have students conduct surveys asking a broad range of people if they know where Kaskaskia is as well as Springfield. Have the students follow up by asking if they know where Chicago is. Students record their findings and share with the class. Discuss findings and determine reasons why more

people were familiar with Chicago. Using the accumulated data, students tally their answers and make a bar graph of ages and responses. If surveying early settlers in 1818 (hopefully a student identifies that as statehood), the findings would have probably been the exact OPPOSITE. How can that be?

Procedures:

Day 1

1. Each student receives a 2 column worksheet with a map of population changes by decade. The whole class will study the map for 1830-1840.

2. Using the 1830-1840 overhead as a guide, ask questions to clarify the meaning of the symbols and brainstorm logical reasons why the population concentrated in certain areas. For example:

Early settlers (mid-1800's) did not settle in the north because of hostile Native Americans

Soil was extremely fertile in the south therefore settlers located there.

Flooding from major rivers is what drove settlers to central Illinois.

Prompt students to consider what they already know about the time period as well. Students record the information in the first column of the 1830-1840 map.

3. Continue this process for the remaining decades, comparing and contrasting maps to further the discussion.

4. Once the class has speculated on reasons for Illinois' population changes, give each student a copy of Historic Population Development, Chapter 5, from Nelson's book. Assign each partnership a specific decade to read about and on the second column of their worksheet identify a minimum of three factors that influenced the population trend of that specific decade.

Day 2

1. Each partnership presents their findings to the class, and classmates record the information in the second column of their worksheets.

2. Following each factor identified, elaborate on their topic with classroom discussion such as:

They identified that in 1830-1840 new farm implements were being developed, such as what? Answer: John Deere's plow

What are some positive and negative effects of plowing the prairie?

+ Easier access to rich soil, new forms of income

- Loss of native plants, sets conditions for the future Dust Bowl 100 yrs later

3. Use relevant overheads to also visually reinforce the factors presented i.e. display population map first and then layer with colored map of 1810 – 1820 IL Prairie

4. Continue this process for the remaining decades.

Concluding the Lesson:

Once all the decades have been addressed, the class as a whole develops 1 – 2 sentences summarizing Illinois' population trends as well as the causes. i.e. Since the 1830's our state's population has gradually shifted from southern Illinois to the Chicago metropolitan area. Inventions such as the steamboat and steel plow as well as wartime labor shortages are just a few reasons why the population relocated north.

Assessing the Activity:

1. Use a checklist to monitor participation in order to assess students in their groups.
2. Collect population change worksheet for completion grade.
3. Additionally, students could pick one decade and describe where they would be likely to live and why.

Extending the Activity:

Study additional topics such as:

Pattern for Illinois settlement pre-statehood using literature and maps on Native American tribes as well as French forts

Impact on determining legislative districts

Special Information:

When breaking the class into partners to study the changes by decade, teachers need to make several decisions based on their specific class size. To study every decade from 1830, partnering may not be ideal for your class' needs. Instead, every other decade could be studied or assign groups two decades apiece to research.

All aspects do not have to be assessed but instead choose the suggested assessment(s) which would best serve your class.

References:

Nelson, Ronald E., Illinois: A Geographical Survey, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Dubuque, IA, 1996.

Moline, Norman and Schebler, James. *Movement*, Illinois History Teacher Volume 1, Geography in Illinois History, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1994, pgs 24 – 27.