



The Acequia Community Colorado's First Settlements K-2

Acequias are intertwined with Colorado's agricultural history, tied into the original establishment of some of the state's oldest communities. In the early 1800's during the Spanish and Mexican colonial period, Acequias were born. Acequias are canal-like structures used for irrigation; they were often the first to be collectively constructed along with churches or homes. Growing food was so important that digging out the acequia to bring water to crops was a priority.

Communities typically grew around an acequia, as neighbors understood the importance of sharing this water. Established more than 150 years ago, acequias remain vital to Southern Colorado's Hispano agriculture.

In these pages, K-2 teachers will find lessons that help students understand how the early Hispano settlers came to settle Southern Colorado.

All lessons are tied to Colorado Content Standards.



The Acequia Community Colorado's First Settlements K-2

These lessons are dedicated to the original Hispano settlers and their descendants who have worked to maintain their culturally significant acequia communities and the organizations that help protect that heritage.

Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association
Costilla County Conservancy District
Land Rights Council
Hereadero's Grazing Association

This curriculum is made possible through funding by

The History Colorado State Historical Fund
Costilla County Economic Development Council
Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center
Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association
Costilla County Conservancy District
Colorado Water Conservation Board



The Acequia Community Colorado's First Settlements K-2

Contents:

	Page
A Birds Eye View	2
Building a Community on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant	4
Building a Community—Then (1830's)	6
Building a Community - Part I	10
Building a Community - Part 2	14
Field Trip Opportunity	16



The Acequia Community Colorado's First Settlements K-2

Learner Outcomes

- Understand that a map is a view from above the landscape
- Explore the differences between the past and today.
- Use words related to time sequences: past, present, future, then and now.
- Understand that the nature of history is stories of the past preserved in various sources.
- Understand that traits like honesty and Sharing are part of a community.

Connections to 2020 Colorado State Standards

Social Studies

Kindergarten: History -1, Geography - 2, Civics -1

1st Grade: History - 1, Geography - 2, Civics -1

2nd Grade: History - 1, Geography - 2, Civics -1

The Program

This program includes three key components: storytelling, a hands-on lesson, and the option of a field trip to visit the built historic landscape. While not all classes are able to visit the site, we hope that the visual and tactile experiences within these lessons help students develop an understanding of these Hispano settlements.



Discovery Center

Settling the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant

A Bird's Eye View

Learner Outcomes:

- Students will use geographic tools to describe places.
- Students will understand that maps are shown from "Bird's Eye View" looking down from above as if flying over the area.

Materials

1. Crayons
2. Markers
3. pencils
4. 8X10 Poster Board

Preparation:

Create a Birds Eye View map of the Classroom on butcher paper. Then take a photo of the classroom while standing in the doorway. Have them ready to class either by hard copy or projection.

Have copy of hispano Farm ready to show either in hard copy or projector.

Have students sit in a reading circle to begin the discussion.

Introduction: To begin show students a the Birds Eye View map of the classroom that you made before the lesson. Compare that to a photograph of the classroom that you took from the doorway of the classroom. Discuss how they how are they different and how are they the alike. the lesson give each student a large piece of paper and have them draw a picture of their shoe from a bird's eye view, looking at it from above. If the students can see their heel then it is not a "bird's eye view." Next have students place 10 items on the floor, these should be small objects in the classroom. Have students take turns standing on a stool and look down on the objects. Help students understand that they do not see the whole object, just the top of the object. Introduce the drawing to students and explain that it is a map is of an early hispano farm, as seen from above and that it shows specific features from a bird's eye view.

Background Information : Please review the following definitions with students.

Hispano: a person descended from Spanish settlers.

Acequia: a shared irrigation ditch.

River: a long body of water that flows over land.

Mountain: a high area of land with steep sides and a sharp peak .

Hill: a raised part of the Earth's surface that is lower than a mountain.

Valley: an area of land that is surrounded on two sides by higher hills.

Tree: Tall plant that has either leaves or needles. An Aspen has leaves and a pine tree has needles.

Garden: A place where people grow food.

House: A place where people live.

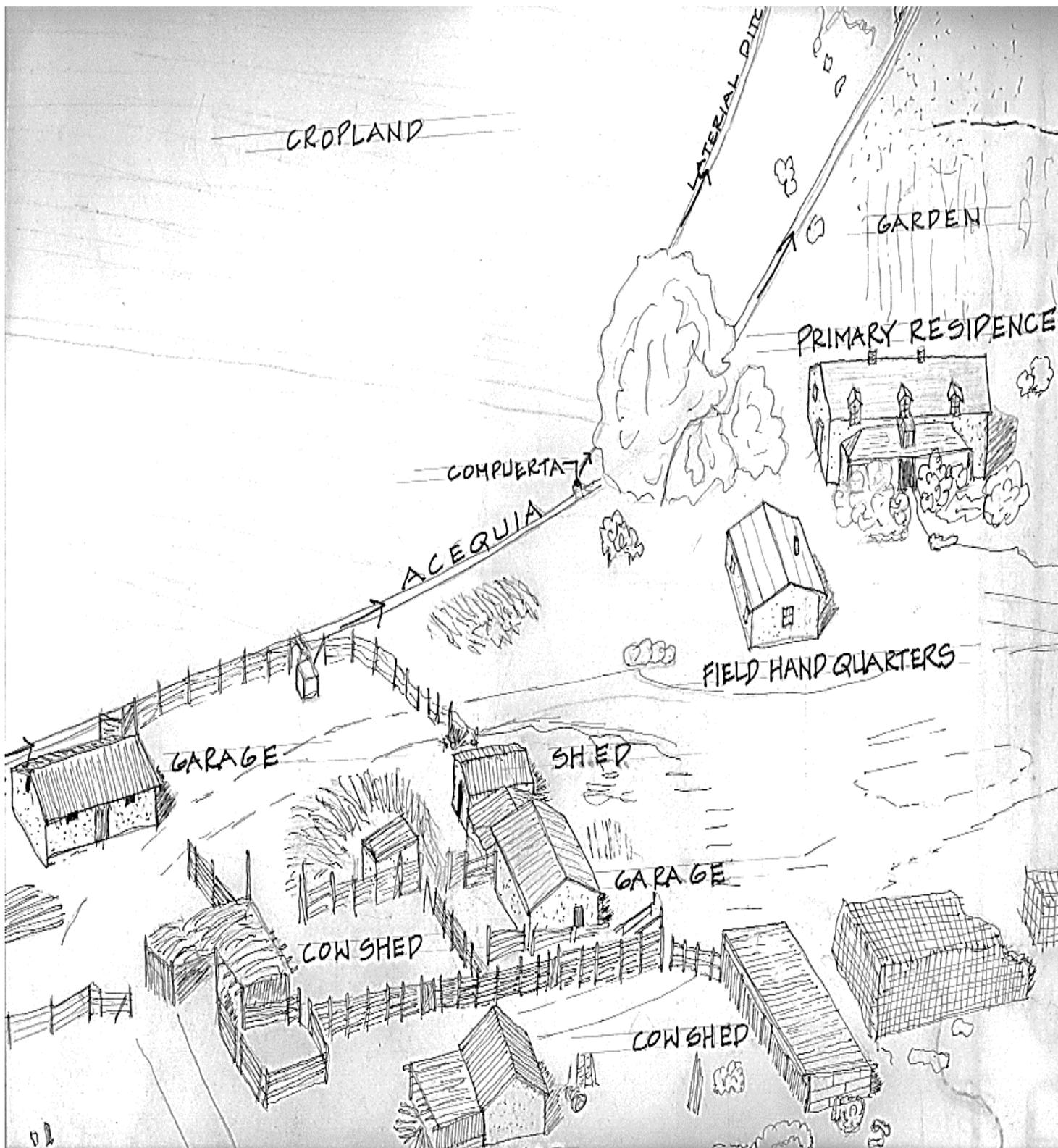
Farm animals: Cows, pigs, sheep, chickens, ducks. These animals live on a farm.

Activity Procedures: To begin the lesson "A Birds Eye View" draw or find a picture of a farm scene, place it on a table and have students look down on it as if they were a bird flying over the farm. Keep the scene in place so students have a tabletop model to reference.

After students have been given the opportunity to observe the scene, have students draw their "birds eye view" of the scene on their poster paper. Encourage them to put in as many details as they remember.

Time: 35 minutes **Location:** Indoors

Arial drawing of an acequia homestead. Please discuss the various parts of the homestead and why each was needed.





Discovery Center

Settling the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant

Building a Community

Learner Outcomes:

- Students will use geographic tools to describe places. For example: globes, maps
- Students will use either a map and a globe as ways to show where places are located using geographic tools.
- Explain that maps and globes are different representations of Earth.
- Students will understand the differences between people who lived a long time ago and their lives now.
- Students will understand that when people build a community they use resources that they find in nature. This includes wood, water and soil
- Effective groups have responsible leaders and team members.

Materials

1. Globe
2. Map of Colorado

Preparation:

Have students sit in a reading circle to begin the story and discussion.

Introduction: *In this lesson students will learn how people build new communities. Begin by using the globe and have students identify the oceans, the continents, and the countries. Ask students if they know what country we live in? Then point out the United States. Now move to a map of the US. Ask students if they know what state we live in? Finally, use the Colorado map and ask students to identify where they are right now. Students should name their town and school.*

What does Colorado have that makes it special to you? Write their answers on the board.

Activity: *Begin by talking about what humans need to survive. Write student responses on the board. If necessary coach them to include things like water, clothing, shelter, food, etc. Next, preface the story by explaining that communities did not always look the way they do now. Once there was vast wilderness and people who wanted to live there had to build the things they needed for their families using resources from the land. Native Americans, the United States first human settlers, used the rivers for water to drink, forests for poles for their teepee's and wood for their fires, animals (deer, elk, bison and fish) for food and clothing.*

After the discussion read the story of the land grant settlement, as you read, stop from time to time to ask students about the resources the settlers would look for to help them construct a homestead? What might these people have brought with them to insure they could live with their families? What did the land grant provide for them and their families? What might the community have today that it did not have when it was settled?

Time: 35 minutes

Location: Indoors



The Story of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant

The Story of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant

Today we are going to learn about The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was a piece of land in southern Colorado that was settled by members of the Hispanic community.

A long time ago people had to build their homes and communities from things they found in nature. To do this people often had to risk their lives and those of their families. They faced bad weather that would bring big storms with snow or rain. They had to be careful because there were wild animals and rough mountain passes that they had to cross. To help guide them, the people needed a leader. A leader is a person who guides a group and helps keep them safe. In the days of the land grant, the people chose a leader that they believed could get them through these dangers. His name was Carlos Beaubien. Beaubien was a trapper who spent all of his time in the areas mountains.

The settlers liked him and his love of the their customs and beliefs that had been passed down from one generation to the next. The tradition or custom the people valued the most was sharing. They knew that if they shared the things they had the whole community benefited. Beaubien helped them get across the mountains and into the Culebra valley. Together they developed a place for all of their animals to graze, gathered wood for building and to make fires to keep warm. Finally, they shared the land that had a river, so the people and animals would have water to drink and so they could water their crops. The name of this place was the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

These early settlers built small log and adobe mud houses with the wood they gathered from the forest and the clay they got from the soil. They built barns for their animals because they kept chickens, sheep, and cattle for food; They grew gardens and planted small orchards because there were no stores to buy food and they enjoyed the fresh vegetables and fruits. . They grew beans, corn, peas, and squash and harvested apples, plums and cherries from their orchards. They irrigated their fields using hand dug ditches called acequias (ah-sek-ee-uhs) to carry water from the stream to their fields and homes. Children on the acequia homestead would help with the chores. They did things like feed the farm animals, carry in the fire wood and helped do the dishes after each meal. When they played, they pretended they were the brave people they met on their journey and played games like hide and seek and tag. They grew up to be farmers and ranchers who loved the wide open spaces of the land grant and everything that it gave them. These land grant villages are still occupied by the descendants of those original settlers.



Discovery Center

Settling the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant: Building a Community—Then (1830's)

Time: 45 minutes

Location: Indoors

Learner Outcomes:

- Students Understand the nature of historical knowledge as a process of inquiry to ask question and discuss ideas.
- Describe the characteristics of a community and how they are influenced by the environment.
- Explain why the order of events is important.

Materials

1. Print student cut outs on pages 7 and 8.
2. Scissors to cut out figures if ability level allows, if not pre-cut all cut-outs for each student.
3. Larger paper.
4. Glue
5. Crayons

Preparation:

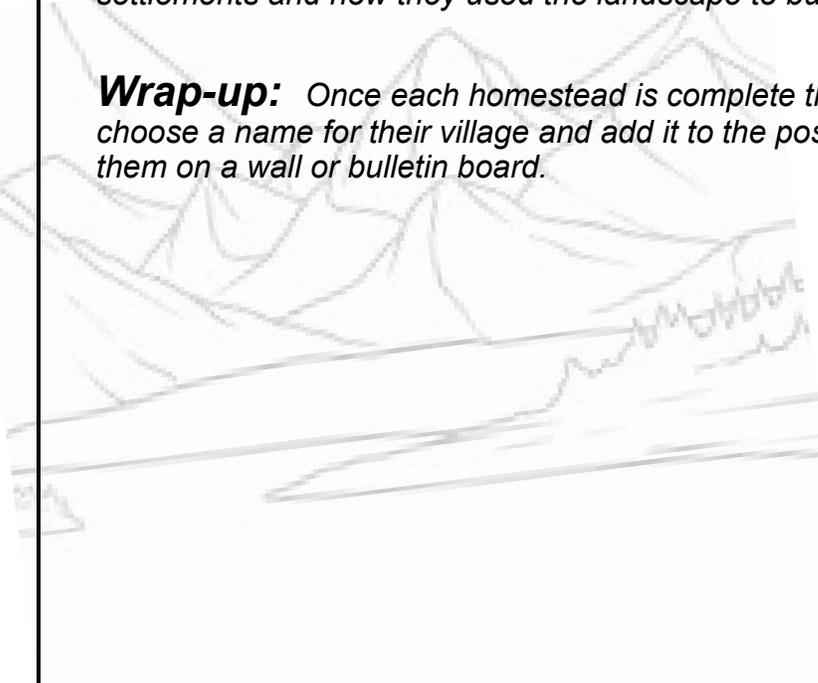
Have materials prepared and in small boxes/bags ready to set on to students desks/tables.

Introduction: *Students will use their knowledge of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to develop their own land grant community.*

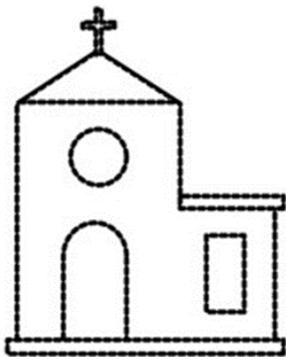
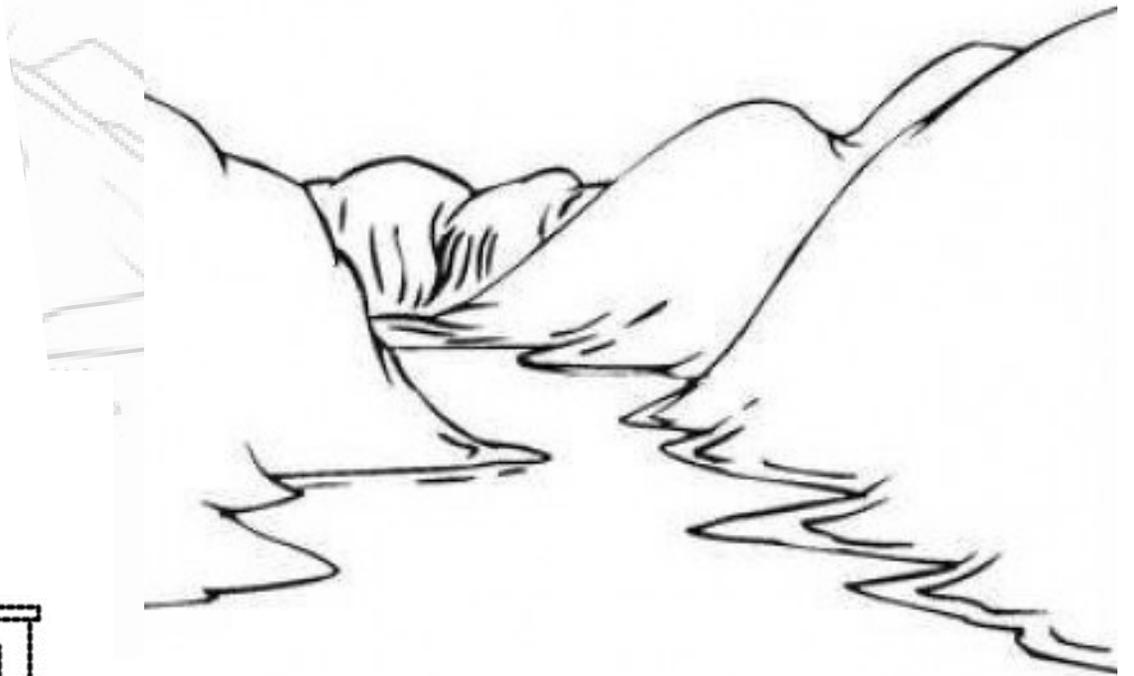
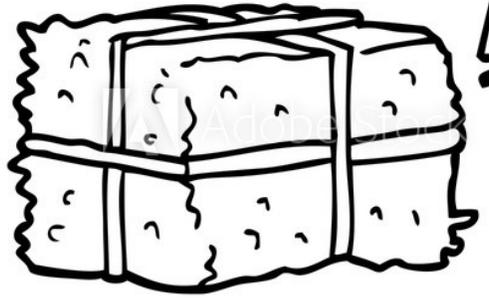
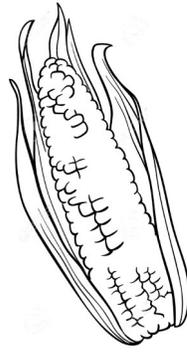
Activity: In this lesson students will choose the things that they would need to live on a Hispano homestead. Lay the cut-outs on the table. Have students then choose what they will need to live and build a community. Next have students color their items and then glue them on to their sheet of paper creating their own land grant community.

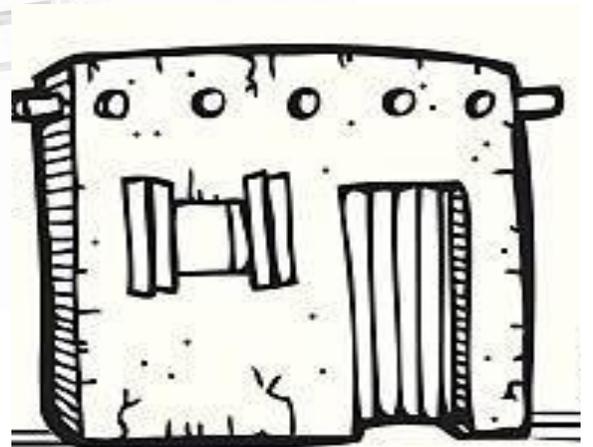
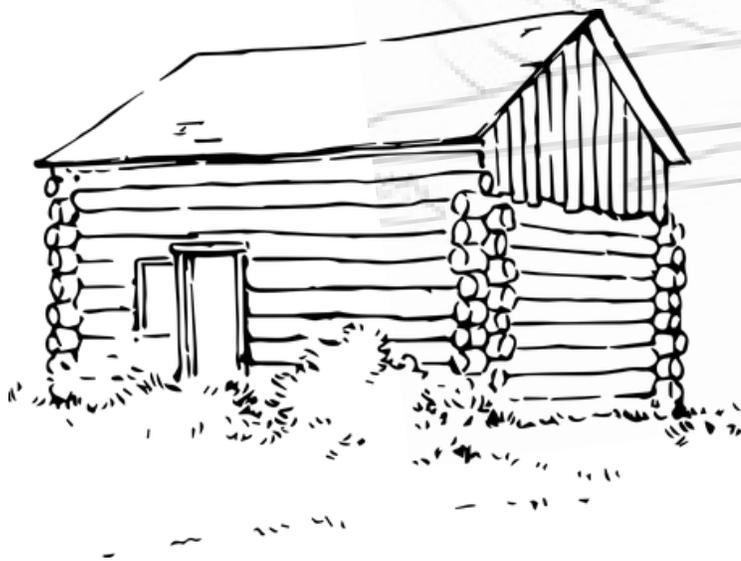
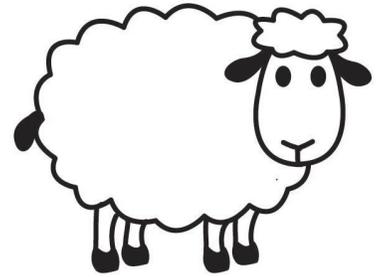
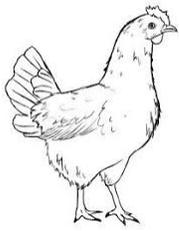
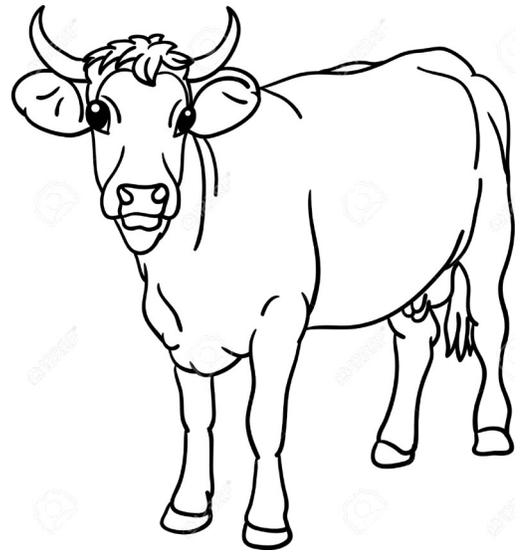
Conclusion: *Students should be able to understand what the early settlers needed to live in the early days of the land grant settlements and how they used the landscape to build communities.*

Wrap-up: *Once each homestead is complete then have students choose a name for their village and add it to the poster. Then post them on a wall or bulletin board.*











Discovery Center

Settling the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant—Acequia History

Building a Community - Part 1

Learner Outcomes:

- Students understand the nature of historical knowledge as a process of inquiry to ask question and discuss ideas.
- Describe the characteristics of a community and how they are influenced by the environment.
- Explain why the order of events is important.

Materials

1. Projector with internet capability to play video link.

Preparation:

Have students gather in a circle to watch video and discuss.

Have the pictures of original acequia homes printed or ready to project.

Introduction: *Students will learn what an acequia is and why it is so important to the Acequia community.*

Activity: An acequia is a hand dug ditch that helps irrigate farms and ranches. The ditches allowed the water to flow from one farm to the next giving each family all of water they needed. When there was a lot of snow the ditches were full, so everyone got all the water they could use. In years where there wasn't much snow they still shared so that everyone had some water. What makes an acequia important is that it is a shared resource—everyone gets the water they need!

We are going to watch a video about “Fina” a young girl whose family lives on an acequia today.

<https://vimeo.com/366326367/2680c997e8>

After watching the video, ask students what makes an acequia so important to Fina? Why did the community take care of the land and water? Do all communities have an acequia? Why is it important to know about events that happened in the past? Would we be where are today without the sacrifice of these original settlers? Thinking about the homes of the past how does it compare to houses today? Use pictures included on pages XX to illustrate what an original acequia home might have looked like, is your house the same as the house of the acequia settlers? How is it different?

Conclusion: *Students will understand early settlers used sharing to make sure their whole community had the shelter food and water that they needed.*

Time: 45 minutes

Location: Indoors



The San Luis Peoples Acequia — Located just outside of San Luis on R&R Family Farms. The San Luis Peoples Ditch is Colorado's first water right filed before Colorado was state in 1852.

Photos from the Sangre de Cristo Heritage Area Archive.
<https://www.sangreheritage.org>



An original adobe homestead located in the acequia village of San Pablo.

Photos from the Sangre de Cristo Heritage Area Archive.
<https://www.sangreheritage.org>



Top: An original adobe homestead in San Pedro
Bottom: A modernized original log homestead Originally built in 1850 this homestead was still occupied in 1968

Photo from the Sangre de Cristo Heritage Area archive.



Discovery Center

Settling the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant—Acequia History

Building a Community - Part 2

Learner Outcomes:

- Students Understand the nature of historical knowledge as a process of inquiry to ask question and discuss ideas.
- Describe the characteristics of a community and how they are influenced by the environment.

Materials

1. Clear plastic cups one for each student.
2. Paper towels for water clean-up.
3. Crayons

Preparation:

Have cups ready to set on to students desks/tables.

Jug of water so teacher/ adult can fill the main cup with water.

Copy of Acequia Irrigator on page 15 for each student.

Introduction: Settlers along an Acequia shared the water that flowed through the acequia. This gave everyone water for them and their animals to drink. It let the settlers grow food and have good pasture to graze their sheep and cattle. It also insured that wildlife could migrate.

Activity: An acequia is a hand dug ditch that helps irrigate farms and ranches. The ditches allowed the water to flow from one farm to the next giving each family all of the water they needed. Today we are going to share our water!

Give each student group a set of cups—one for the main water source and one for each student in the group.

Fill each main water source glass with some water (it is helpful to only fill 2/3 to 3/4 in each main glass). Ask them to divide the water equally among each student in their group. Once completed have a class discussion about whether it was easy or difficult to share? Why?

Conclusion: Students will understand early settlers used sharing to make sure their whole community had the water that they needed.

Wrap-up: Once you have completed the class discussion have students color their acequia irrigator.

Time: 45 minutes

Location: Indoors



Discovery Center

Settling the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant—Acequia History

Building a Community - Now





Field Introduction

Overview: Students will visit the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant where they will visit an acequia village. These sites will demonstrate how early Hispano settlers settled the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

Time: 2 hour visit.

Location: Outdoors

Learner Outcomes:

1. Students will experience early Hispano settlements.
2. Students will experience the connection of people to the land and the arrangement of natural to man-made spaces.
3. Students will understand how a land grant helped develop early settlement in Colorado.

Preparation:

Please contact:

Sangre de Cristo Heritage
Center Museum
401 Church Place
San Luis CO 81152
719-672-0999
costillacountyedc@gmail.com

Arrangements should be made at least 3 weeks in advance to give staff time to set up your desired field experience.

Overview: Students will visit the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant where they will visit an acequia village. These sites will demonstrate how early Hispano settlers settled the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

Welcome to the Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center Museum

Today we will visit an acequia village. This short walk will take students to an acequia home site, where students will have the opportunity to see first hand an original home, church and acequia.

While there, students will wrap up the day with an original land grant story told by village elders and have a snack of local foods.

Note: While the sites will vary depending on the museums guide availability. We suggest helping students frame their visit using the following types of questions:

How are places like communities similar to and different from where you live?

How do people celebrate traditions?

How do people use resources in the local community?

How do individuals in the community use the environment?