**Teacher:** S. Aviles

**Boxcar Trunk:** Life in a Boxcar

**Suggested Grade Levels**: 9-12 Duration: 3 days, 80 minutes each.

**Standards:**

* SS.IS.1.9-12. Address essential questions that reflect an enduring issue in the field.
* SS.IS.4.9-12 Gather and evaluate information from multiple sources while considering the origin, credibility, point of view, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources.
* SS.IS.7.9-12. Articulate explanations and arguments to a targeted audience in diverse settings.
* CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
* CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5 Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

**Objectives:** (The students will…)

* Analyze various sources and pull out key information about the boxcar communities *(2 worksheets with sub-search + analysis from Day 1)*
* Create a realistic boxcar home for their own family based on what was given to these families during this time. *(Final Project from Day 2+3)*
* Identify the various jobs and roles that men, women, and children took on and understand through a cultural lens. *(Written portion of Boxcar Project)*

**Materials:**

* (3) Worksheets created by the teacher
* Boxcar People DVD
* Articles about Boxcar communities from online for students to analyze
* Photos from Knox College Archives or online for gallery walk
* Styrofoam boards for each student
* Big white paper
* Scissors
* Glue
* Popsicle sticks
* Construction paper
* Rulers
* Anchor Chart

**Notes to the Teacher:**

This lesson should span 3 (80 min) classes. The background information on the boxcar communities will come from various sources online or ones found from the archives in Knox Library. The library items are primary sources. The worksheets have a small article and students are asked various questions at the end to check comprehension. Their "Create a Boxcar home" project should take up 1-2 of those classes. You may want to decorate the bulletin board or walls with images prior to class and allow time for students to view examples.

**Procedure:**

Anticipatory Set: Gallery walk around the classroom to look at various primary sources/photos from the Boxcar communities in Galesburg (archives copies)

**Day 1**

1. Explain that Galesburg, Illinois and other railroading communities once housed workers in boxcars. Introduce the documentary and show 10 or more minutes of background about Mexican families immigrating to Illinois to work on the railroad.
2. Distribute additional primary sources from the Seymour Library archives.
3. Allow 10 minutes for students to look over sources and come together as a class to talk about information that students found interesting and things they have never heard of before!
4. Pass out handout #1 where students are asked to read an article and answer questions at the end. (15 minutes)
5. Think-Pair-Share with another student about the article. (10 minutes)
6. Pass out handout #2 where students are asked to read another article from online and answer questions. (15 minutes)
7. Conduct a class discussion. Was the second time easier to complete? What can we say about life at this time? How do we see the bigger picture? What is the most compelling information? Does anyone in class have personal ties to boxcar communities?
8. Collect the handouts for grading.
9. Close by explaining that during the next class period, students will be designing a boxcar sized home. Direct students to examine their own home and possessions. Have them create a “Couldn’t Do Without” list of items they feel would be essential in a home. Clarify any directions about the assignment.

**Day 2**

1. Show another segment of the Boxcar people documentary. Encourage students to take notes about living conditions during the era.
2. Ask students to share examples of what interested or surprised them about the speakers who are reminiscing about their experiences.

Model and Independent Work

1. Introduce "Create a Boxcar Home" project. Pass out instruction sheet and go over what expectations are for this assignment.
2. Begin the first steps where students brainstorm for ideas about what would be needed. They can share ideas about what they put on their “Couldn’t Do Without” list. (15 min)
3. Pass out large piece of white paper and rulers for each student to draw a blue print of their boxcar. They should be trying to make this home fit all their family and be realistic with what was given to these people at this time. (30 min)
4. Circulate and check in on every student. Are they where they should be? Are they being realistic? Could their blue print be put to real life?
5. Ask students to write an exit slip explaining how they are doing so far in their project and what materials they anticipate needing. (The teacher has many materials such as markers, construction paper, and scissors, but this gives a teacher a chance to get additional materials if needed.)

**Day 3**

Independent Work

1. Point out the station of various materials and show the location of items specific requested materials for people.
2. Give students a Styrofoam board. Direct students to draw the dimensions of their boxcar and indicate where things will go.
3. Explain that students will be able to take materials and create a 3D model of what their boxcar would look like. This allows creative freedom!
4. Circulate and check in with students the entire time, helping where necessary.

Assessment:

1. When students are finished, have students put their projects around the class and we will do a gallery walk! (This can go on to the next day if students are not finished by the end of Day 3.)
2. Collect written portions of Boxcar Project (“Couldn’t Do Without” list, Notes/answers to Q’s from instruction sheet)

Extensions or Ideas for Further Study

1. Suggest looking at topics of immigration, building the wall, policies of immigration, negative stereotypes.
2. Encourage students to seek out more information, visit places where boxcar communities have ties, talk to people who experienced firsthand, and to talk about this event in history more often since it is not well known but should be!
   1. i.e. Taco Hideout in Galesburg
   2. i.e. Talk with Tianna Cervantes from Knox College CIL who has personal ties to Boxcar communities
3. Display documentaries, books, and other sources to check out if interested.
   1. Books written by Boxcar people
   2. Articles written by Boxcar people
   3. Past reunion events or talks for the Boxcar people from Knox College Library Archives

**Additional Comments**

1. To make this lesson more advanced/creative, I would add to the end a whole class collaboration. Students in this original lesson plan create their own personal model of a boxcar for their family and in the advanced version, students bring all their boxcars together to create a large boxcar community.
2. Using LARGE pieces of styrofoam or possibily wood, we would organize all the boxcars to mirror what the boxcar communinities looked like.
3. We would, as a class also create, railroad tracks and show how close these boxcars were to the tracks and also include grass, gravel, and dirt.
4. I would like the final product to be shown off to the school and possibly local musuems, such as the National Railroad Hall of Fame.