

WOMEN'S WORK DURING THE GOLD RUSH

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OVERVIEW

Students will read primary source documents in order to understand the role of women and place of families in early (1858-1865) Colorado mining camps and towns.

STANDARDS

- History Standard 2.2: Students know how to interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources of information.
- History Standard 3.2: Students understand the history of social organization in various societies.
- Reading and Writing Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Read and gather information from primary source documents
- Draw conclusions about the role of women in Colorado during the Pikes Peak Gold Rush
- Write about the life of women in Colorado during the Gold Rush

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What was life like for women living in early Colorado mining camps?
- What kinds of work did women do?
- In what ways did women help their families economically?

PROCEDURE

1. CD-ROM/Internet use: print and copy the following primary source documents for use in student groups (the following documents are all available in the Doing History Archives):
 - There Were Few Families (from Mining Families)
 - Weary Days of Labor and Pain (from Mine Women's Work)
 - Taking in Boarders (from Mine Women's Work)
 - Keeping a Boarding House (from Mine Women's Work)

Doing History/Keeping the Past
Colorado Mining – Inquiry Activities

- Dress Making (from Mine Women’s Work)
 - Hotel Work (from Mine Women’s Work)
2. Divide students into four groups and give each group multiple copies of one of the above documents.
 3. Ask students in each group to read their documents and discuss the important points.
 4. Have each group agree on the salient points of their document and record those points on a piece of paper.
 5. Jigsaw members of the original groups into new groups.
 6. Ask students to share their knowledge with others in the group.
 7. Based on the information shared in the group, they should draw conclusions about the life of women and their families in early Colorado mining towns.
 8. Share that information in a class discussion.
 9. Ask each student to write a paragraph describing the lives of women in early Colorado mining towns.