**HISTORICAL PROGRAMS**

**A Nation of Immigrants** – informational slide show, songs, folktales, anecdotes and fictional excerpts. Immigration is a “hot topic” in today’s world, but most children and adults do not understand the tremendous contribution immigrants have made to our country or the long, complicated history of how they have been received and treated. Jon brings the story of immigrant America alive by combining the songs and stories of English, Irish, Eastern European (especially Jewish), African, Chinese and Hispanic immigrants together with excerpts from current children’s literature and a historical slide show using primary sources.

Curriculum Connection – research project on an immigrant group – its reasons for immigrating, challenges, contributions. Students can choose from their own ethnic group, including African American, or another.

Sample songs & tales –

* Theme song: “I Am an Immigrant,” by John McCutcheon
* Irish medley:
  + tale – *Jamie O’Rourke and the Big Potato*, by Tomie de Paola;
  + short slide show of the Irish potato famine including excerpt from historical novel, *Nory Ryan’s Song*, by Patricia Reilly Giff
  + Work song: “Paddy On the Railroad”
* Jewish tale – Book: *Letters from Rifka*, by Karen Hesse; folktale: “Challah in the Ark”
* Hispanic immigrants - song – “Cancion Mixteca”; allegorical picture book: *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant’s Tale by Duncan Tonatiuh*; chapter book: *Esperanza Rising*, by Pam Muñoz Ryan; Historical life story of Salvadoran refugee fleeing gang violence and coming to the US
* Asian immigrants – book: *Inside Out and Back Again*, by Thanhha Lai; Japanese wisdom tale – “The Long Chopsticks” or Chinese folktale, “The Ragged Emperor”
* African real life chapter book: *A Long Walk to Water*, by Linda Sue Park;

African American folk song, “The Grey Goose” – People try without success to kill, cook and eat a grey goose, but he just flies away, symbolic of African American survival under slavery and segregation

**The Way West**

Songs, anecdotes, historical background and primary document slide show. No topic more encapsulates the mythology of our country, with its contradictory mix of adventure, hardship, and exploitation, than the story of Westward expansion. Especially for grades 5 & 9

Curriculum connection: Kick-off for research projects on 19th century America wherein student pairs research one aspect of this topic, examining and presenting different points of view. Sample pieces:

* Early westward movement through the Applachians – Folk song: “My Home’s Across the Blue Ridge Mountains”
* Lewis & Clark expedition & the true story of the Mountain Men
* The journey west through romantic eyes – Folk song: “The Santa Fe Trail”
* The Homestead Act: Little House on the Prairie vs folk song, “Starving to Death on a Government Claim”
* Devastating impact of Westward expansion on American Indians – song, “Heart of the Appaloosa” about the 2,000 mile retreat of the Nex Perce
* Impact on Mexicans living in the southwest - The Mexican American War and the Treaty of Dolores Hidalgo; song: “Santy Ano”
* The Transcontinental Railroad – Legend and true story of John Henry
* Cowboy life, legend and lies - The cattle drives; The tall tale of Pecos Bill
* Tall tales of outlaws and marshalls – The big lie: Wyatt Earp
* A real hero: The Legend and true story of Bass Reeves, Black marshall

**The Industrial Revolution & the Fight for Workers’ Rights**

This program focuses on the textile industry and coal mining, the fight against child labor and the fight for labor unions and better working conditions. Powerful, expressive songs about those industries and movements are presented along with anecdotes and history, against a backdrop of slides. Grades 3 up. Sample content:

• Songs of the textile mills:“Cotton Mill Girls”, “Aragon Mill,” (mill closing) and “Get Out of Bed, You Sleepyheads” (child labor)

• Excerpts from the novels, Lyddie and Counting on Grace

• Songs of the coal mines: “Which Side Are You On?”, “The Blue Diamond Mines,” “Green Rolling Hills of West Virginia”

• Biographies of labor leaders, Mother Jones and Cesar Chavez