**TRUNK CONTENTS**

**BUTTER CHURN & MOLD** – After milking a cow on your farm or ranch, a pioneer would let the fresh milk sit so that the cream would rise to the top. Pioneers would scoop that thick cream off and put it in a butter churn. (The churn here is a miniature version. Typical churns are 1-2 feet tall.) The churn (wooden handle stick with pieces at the bottom) is then moved up and down continuously until butter separates from the cream, and is scooped out, salted, and mashed into the butter mold. When the butter cools in the mold, the handle is pushed to force the butter out in a block form to be used for cooking.

**COFFEE POT & COFFEE GRINDER** – Roasted coffee beans were purchased in a big bag and ground into the more familiar form in a grinder. Drinkable coffee was then made by boiling water with freshly ground coffee in a metal coffee pot over a fire or on a wood-burning stove. When pioneers poured their coffee into their cups, they poured slowly so that the grounds wouldn’t go into their cups.

**IRON** – Ironing was difficult, hot work. This iron was placed on a wood-burning stove to be heated. With a rag as a hot-pad, the woman would lift the iron and begin ironing or pressing the clothes to remove wrinkles. Clothes were mostly made from cotton, which wrinkled easily and required ironing. An experienced pioneer woman would judge when the iron got too hot because she had to make sure it wouldn’t burn the clothes.

**WATER DIPPER** – Water came from a stream or more likely a well. Water was drawn in a bucket and dipped out with this long handled dipper. Pioneer families dipped water into jugs or buckets to take inside the house or water the animals. If they just needed a quick drink, they usually all drank from same dipper.

**METAL PLATE AND CUP, BEATER, WOOD SPOON** – Durable dishes were a must! If you traveled across the country in a wagon, glass things would break, so most came with dishes and kitchen items made of metal and wood, and some heavy pottery. Metal dishes and utensils would have to be kept clean and dry when not in use, to avoid rust.

**CANDLE HOLDER** – Candles and lanterns were the only sources of light at night. Windows were usually of a good size to allow sunlight in during the day. Candles were made from wax or rendered animal fat. Wicks of flax or cotton were dipped multiple times to make taper candles. The candles were held in simple candle holders that would catch drips. Pioneers had to be careful having live fires in lanterns, candles, and stoves in their houses, but this was a regular part of their lives.
**GIRL’S APRON & BONNET** – Aprons were commonly worn over a girls’ dress mostly to keep her dress clean. Since girls only had 2 or 3 dresses, and since washing and caring for clothes took more time and trouble, they didn’t wash their clothes any more often than necessary. Aprons were worn at home, school, and most places during everyday life. Half aprons were the most common, but pinafores (full aprons) were popular for girls to protect almost the entire dress.

Bonnets were usually home-made from scrap fabric from another sewing project or from a feed or flour sack. They kept a girl’s head warm in the winter and protected her from the sun in the summer. Since pioneers didn’t wash their hair very often, bonnets also helped keep girls’ hair clean. They were only worn outside. *You may try these items on, with care.*

**BOY’S VEST & SHIRT** – Boys wore shirts of simple cloth and had long sleeves. Boys rarely had more than 2 or 3 shirts. “Hand-me-downs” were common, meaning clothing was handed down from child to child. You would wear clothes that your older brother wore.

Vests were worn for extra warmth and to have extra pockets. They were usually made of heavier fabric than shirts. Buttons on a home-made shirt or vest might be made of a locally available material, such as animal horns or wood. *You may try these items on, with care.*

**WASHBOARD** – Clothes got dirty because pioneer life was hard. Before washing machines were invented, clothes were washed by hand in washtubs. Water was heated in a pot over an open fire, and they used homemade lye soap. They scrubbed their clothes on a washboard to remove stubborn stains, being careful not to wear a hole in the fabric by rubbing too hard or too long on the rubboard. Clothes were hung on a line to dry in the sun and wind. *You may pretend to wash clothes by rubbing the dishcloth on the board.*

**QUILT** – Winters were cold and heating only came from a wood-burning stove. Sleeping comfortable all night required layers of warm bedding. Blankets weren’t very common, so quilts were made from scrap pieces of fabrics. Fabric also came from seed and flour sacks. Quilts can be made in simple designs like squares or with great artistic mastery. These pieced quilt tops were sewn by hand and placed on top of batting and more fabric, and then sewn together with thousands of stitches. Sometimes, quilting bees were held where many women would “quilt” one quilt. They would sit around the edges of a quilt held on a wood frame and each would sew a part that was in front of them. Quilts tend to be kept and used through many generations of families. (This quilt is made in miniature form. A real quilt is typically the size of a bed.) A quilt book and quilt piece guides are also provided.

**SCHOOL BELL** – The ringing of a bell tells the area’s students when it is time to go to school in the morning and after any breaks from class, such as lunch. The teacher would ring the bell at the door of the school or have a student ring it. It could be a hand bell or a larger iron bell on a stand outside the school. A large bell could also be used as an emergency warning for the town to gather at the school for a meeting.

**MCGRUFFEY’S ECLECTIC READERS** – These books were common reading text books in pioneer schoolhouses. They would be shared by multiple students, as books were hard to acquire and expensive. These books used phonics and memorization techniques to develop reading ability and included a broad variety of literary selections. Handwriting, spelling rules, basic science lessons, and values such as honesty and courage were also taught through these books. Students could advance through the readers at their own pace, as each volume increased in difficulty.
**Hornbook** — A hornbook is usually a piece of wood with handle that has some kind of educational material displayed on it for students to use for studying. The handle made it easy to hold. They were usually covered with a transparent layer of horn or mica, thus the name. They would usually repeat the skill on the hornbook many times to memorize it, such as the alphabet or spelling skills. On the alphabet listing, students could practice letter names and sounds, but also be challenged to think of, for example, an adjective that starts with each letter. They could also have verses, poetry, or other rhythmic readings that could be repeated. A few games were invented using the hornbook as a paddle, probably to the teacher’s dismay.

**Slate & Chalk** — Students typically used slates at school, especially to practice handwriting and math skills. Slates were cheap, but paper and pencils or pens and ink were rare and too expensive for everyday use. Slates could be written on over and over. The teacher would check the student’s work, and then slates could be erased with a small cloth, allowing the slate to be used again.

**Spelling Bee List** — Spelling bees were very popular. Students enjoyed competing against each other to find the best speller in class. Teachers could use spelling bees in class to reinforce spelling skills, and they could vary the complexity of the words given for varying ages and skill levels of the students. The game could be played as teams, given a word to a team at a time, and having a team spokesman give their final spelling. Bees could also be conducted with children in a line, and each child is given a word to spell individually. Bees were sometimes a community gathering event, as well, and adults in town were invited to participate.

**Wood Toys** — Pull toys were commonly homemade and thrilled every young child. Wagons let a child pull around a doll or rock collection. Varied wood toys, such as ball and stick type, were durable and provided hours of entertainment. Pick-up sticks could be bought but more likely made from splintered wood. Sticks were thrown in a pile, and players competed to see how many sticks they could remove without moving any other sticks.

**Jacks & Marbles** — If a pioneer child had jacks or marbles, they considered themselves lucky. They played with friends and competed for the best skills. Jacks are thrown on the ground. A ball is bounced and a certain amount of jacks must be scooped up with your hand before the ball bounces again. Marbles are spread out inside a circle drawn in the dirt. Using a larger “shooter” marble, players shoot smaller marbles out of the circle. Players got to keep the marbles they shot out. Children often competed with each other to keep favorite designs of marbles.

**Cats Cradle & Cloth Ball** — Many games were made from available materials. Cat’s Cradle is a string or yarn game. String was looped between fingers and artistic tricks were created. Strings and an instruction book are included. Unlike modern, rubber balls, a ball was made of scraps of cloth and stuffed with any other scraps. Kids love to throw, catch and hit balls. It’s just a natural way to play.
SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO. CATALOG – Though the pioneers had to make do with whatever they brought with them on a covered wagon, they soon began to have access to mail service. This included a catalog of many valuable products. Whether you needed a stove, carpet, violin, underwear, sewing machine, tools, or a crate of baby chicks, the Sears catalog probably had it available to order. However, you would need to allow plenty of time to have your order shipped to you!

REFERENCE BOOKS – Several books are provided to add information to your lessons for enriching your students’ learning about pioneer children and their lives.

PUPPETS – Horse and cow puppets are provided. Dramatic play is encouraged! Enjoy! Suggestion: If they could talk:
- What would a horse or cow be thinking in pioneer times?
- What would they say to a cowboy?
- What would they say to a child on the ranch?
- What would they say to each other, or to other animals?
- How do they each think they are important to ranch life?

TIPS ON PACKING THE TRUNK:

1. PLACE HEAVY ITEMS TOWARD THE BOTTOM.

2. USE THE TRUNK INVENTORY CHECKLIST TO ENSURE ALL ITEMS HAVE BEEN PACKED.

3. IF ANY ITEMS ARE BROKEN OR DAMAGED, BE SURE TO LET THE NRHC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT KNOW PRIOR TO, OR WHEN DROPPING OFF.