

# Becoming Kansas: The People and the Struggles That Built the State

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Wakarusa River Valley Heritage Museum  
Communities of the Wakarusa Valley in Douglas County:  
*Richland*  
Primary Lesson Plan (K-3)

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## History, Government, and Social Studies Standard(s)

Standard #1: Choices have consequences.  
Benchmarks:

- 1.1 The student will recognize and evaluate significant choices and consequences that have impacted our lives and futures.
- 1.2 The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about choices and consequences.
- 1.3 The student will investigate and connect examples of choices and consequences with contemporary issues

Standard #2: Individuals have rights and responsibilities.  
Benchmark:

- 2.1 The student will recognize and evaluate the rights and responsibilities of people living in societies.



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This *Becoming Kansas* lesson plan has been made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.

# Overview



This plan is designed to support classroom instruction in history, government, and social studies at the primary level (K-3). It can be completed in 1-3 hours depending upon how many pre and post activities and which displays you choose to include. The specific theme of this lesson is *Communities of the Wakarusa Valley in Douglas County: Richland*.

Prior to arriving at the museum, review the key vocabulary with the class. Follow that by reviewing the foundation information with students. It may help to focus the conversation on the guiding questions:

What are some choices you make at school and at home?

What are the consequences of your choices?

Are consequences always negative?

What responsibilities do you have at home and at school?

## Foundation Information:

Kansas History, Government, and Social Studies Standard 1:

Choices made by individuals and groups have consequences.

Standard 2: Rights are the basic freedoms of individuals

The classroom teacher should review the information in the Overview prior to arriving at the museum. Ensure that students understand the terms choice and consequence as well as how they are connected.

## Key vocabulary to front load for primary students:

Dry Goods and Sundries: items purchased in the general store.

Choice: making a decision

Consequence: the result of something occurring earlier

Rights: what people are allowed to do

Responsibilities: a duty or chore; what you are supposed to do for others in a certain location or group if you are a good member of the group

The following are aspects of choices and consequences:

- Every choice comes with a cost.
- Individual choice is affected by culture, geography, politics, economics, social or emotional attachments, and other factors including other people.

The following are aspects of rights and responsibilities:

- Rights tell us what we are able to do.
- A responsibility is a duty or obligation to perform or complete.

In October 1854, Charles Matney settled in the area that was to become Richland. The town was located near where Camp Creek joined with the Wakarusa River. In 1857, a post office was opened north of town and a schoolhouse was constructed, out of logs, on the northeast corner of Matney's land. Richland eventually became the center of a rich agricultural region, and its businesses included a bank, a barber shop, a church, two blacksmiths, two doctors, a pharmacy, several lodges, a hotel, and a general store. In the early 1870s, Richland became a station on the St. Louis, Lawrence, and Denver Railroad. That was encouraging to the people of Richland because they believed that the railroad would provide jobs and businesses to the town. However, the railroad stopped running in 1894.

By the 1890s the population was almost 300 and more businesses had been added, including a lumber yard, two millinery shops, and an ice cream parlor. Richland also established a newspaper, *Argosy*, in 1893. It included local news but also news about nearby communities. The building of Clinton Lake was the end of the original Richland. Today little remains of Richland, only the ruins of some buildings, fragments of paved streets, and the cemetery.

## HANDLING MATERIALS

Watch for this icon for opportunities to use hands-on artifacts or materials to make each stop more interactive.



# Richland Exhibit



## DISCUSSION/TOUR

Briefly share the information from the exhibit focusing on the date Richland was founded and the date it was abandoned.

As students initially view the display ask the first 3 leading questions listed below.



## LEADING QUESTIONS

Have students look at the display and ask them what they see that interests them and what they think the topic of the exhibition is.

There might be various answers before getting “Richland”. Ask what kind of town they think Richland was (how old, city or rural, large or small, etc.). Have them point out things that helped them reach their answers.

Ask students if they think that Richland looks much like their town. Why or why not?



## HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Divide students into groups of 2 or 3.

Provide each group with a simple map of the area but without any labels.



## LEADING QUESTIONS

Ask students to identify the items shown on the map. (i.e., river, wildlife area, Richland town location, roads)

Have them label each item either by writing the name or with a sticker image representing each item – what you use will depend on the age of the children. Assign each group an item on the map and ask them to explain why the founders of Richland made the choice to located their town near particular items. Have each group share their answer.

## HANDLING MATERIALS



*Map of the Richland area, items that might have been found in the general store, buggy whip, copies of photos from some of the display areas*



# Richland Town Pump



## DISCUSSION/TOUR

Move the students as a group around the Richland Town Pump. Prior to reviewing the label information, ask students what they think this item is and what it might have been used for.

Share the information from the interpretive label with the students, having them raise their hands each time they hear a fact that shows why the town pump was so important to the development and to the history of Richland. Have volunteers share their observations.



## LEADING QUESTIONS

Have any of you ever used a pump like this?

Ask where their water comes from and how they access it.

Do we all get our water from the same location?

Do you think that everyone (including the horses) drinking from the same well was a safe thing to do?

Why was the choice made to locate the pump in that spot in Richland?

What was the consequence of that choice?

What responsibilities do you think went with being able to use the pump?



## HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Select students to try out the small hand pump.

Select students to try carrying the bucket of rocks across the room.



## LEADING QUESTIONS

How do you compare using the hand pump to turning on the faucet to get water?

What makes the water come out of the pump?

Do you see a hot and cold setting on the pump?

How would you feel carrying a bucket of water each time you need a drink or a bath?

## HANDLING MATERIALS

*Small hand pump, bucket filled with rocks that are approximately the same weight as a bucket of water*



# Richland Exhibit Scavenger Hunt



## DISCUSSION/TOUR

Do a walking tour that reviews the exhibition.

Follow with a tour of the auxiliary room with the display cases that cover Richland School Time, the Richland Homecoming Fair, and the churches of Richland.

Explain the idea of a scavenger hunt.



## LEADING QUESTIONS

Where in the Richland exhibition could you find what you need to fix a snack? Do an art project? Play a game?



## HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Divide students into pairs or small groups.

Provide each group with a copy of the scavenger hunt which lists questions that can be answered by locating items in the Richland exhibition.

Have the groups provide answers to each question either by writing the name or with a sticker image representing each item – what you use will depend on the age of the children.

Assign each group certain questions for which they will share their answers.



## LEADING QUESTIONS

What question was the hardest for you to answer?

Share something you learned today about Richland and the people who lived there.



# Wrap Up Activity

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Remind the students of the exhibits they saw on their tour today.

Share which was your favorite display.

Share what you think had  
the greatest impact on the development of Richland.



# Leading Questions

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What do all the displays have in common? (All focused on the people and things important to Richland.)

Give an example of how Richland would have been different if a certain item, person or event had never existed there.