

2016 Docent Training: Interactive Gallery Experience

Gallery Name: Missions & Ranchos

Docent Name: Rhonda Nalisnik

Activity Name: "FIRE STATION"

Audiences: Check all that apply

Adults Families School Children: Grades: 4th, high school Homeschooled Students

Essential Question: What do you think is humankind's most important or greatest discovery?

Common Core Standards and Content Standards

English Language Arts

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

History-Social Sciences Content Standards

4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

List Touring Techniques

Interactive questions, compare/contrast

Pass around branding irons, cow hide, candle form, candles, flint/striker for students to examine.

List Gallery and/or Interactive Learning Station Artifacts/Objects

Location: In front of fireplace, students sit on floor.

Artifacts from cart needed:

- 2 cattle branding irons
- cow hide showing "bald" spot
- metal candle making form with candles inserted
- pair of candles attached by wick
- flint and metal striker - put in stone depression on right of fireplace

Introduction/Theme/Purpose

Explain that fire is humanity's greatest invention - thought to date from 1 million years ago.

Changed the way people lived. We'll examine the importance of fire on the ranchos.

Activity Description/Steps in Presenting the Activity

I: How to make a fire

Ask students what three things are necessary to make a fire?

-**fuel** (wood to burn),

-**spark** (from lighter, matches, flint, 'rubbing two sticks'),

-**air** (oxygen)

Explain that ancient people did not have a lighter or matches to start a fire.

Show how flint was struck with piece of iron or another piece of flint to get a spark.

Fire was discovered during the "caveman" times. Ask if anyone watches the cartoon, *The Flintstones*. Ask, "Why do you think the cartoon is called *The Flintstones*? (Because the flint stone was used to start fires, invention from that era.)

II: Uses of fire

Ask students what are all the uses of fire? What would people need fire for?

-heat/warmth

-cooking (plants, animals, boiling water to sterilize it)

-light

-keep away predators/animals (Ask if anyone goes camping – why do they use a campfire?)

-make tools, melt metal, like a blacksmith

-harden clay - to make ceramics

-burn away trees to clear land to plant crops

III: Uses of fire on a ranch in 1800's

Ask students the difference between a ranch and farm? (size of property)

Ask what kinds of animals are raised on a ranch? (cattle, horses, sheep, sometimes pigs, goats, chickens; rancho means many animals, thousands of cattle)

A. Cattle Branding

Ask students if anyone has a pet dog or cat? How do you know the dog/cat belongs to you if it is lost?

Student will reply the pet has an identification tags showing name/address/phone.

Explain: On a ranch thousands of cattle would need identification that was easy to spot. Branding with a cattle iron showed ownership if cattle wandered onto other property, prevented theft. Show cattle brands and have students describe the letters seen; 'B' might stand for last name of ranch owner.

Show cattle brands, explain that when put in fire to get red-hot, were burned into skin of cow/steer. Show cow hide and point out bald spot – iron brand burns away hair and scars skin so hair won't grow back, causing the stencil of letter to show. Ask students where on animal would the brand be applied for easy visibility – not head (painful), nor belly (can't be seen), but hip (highest point on body).

Point out that the blacksmith would make the cattle brands (heating metal) to form shape, as well as other tools used on the rancho.

B. Candles for light

Explain that if away from hearth/fireplace, people would need a light at night because electricity not yet invented. Show how candles were made—from animal fat or tallow.

Hold up candle form with candles inside; explain wick fit into mold, slowly poured in melted tallow, over and over to form layers. Hold up two candles attached by wick to show finished product.

C. Fireplace/hearth used for cooking, heat, light - gathering place

Explain: Cooking on a rancho meant many people would be eating, hence the large pot.

Ask what kinds of things could be cooked in such a pot? Stew, soups, beans

Show iron hook used to hang a pot to cook things.

Explain metal rod could be placed across hearth to roast meats.

Show "comal" hanging on fireplace. Ask students if they know its use. Answer: to make tortillas, could also be used as a lid for the pot, could cook food on top of "comal" lid while something else is in the pot cooking, like meat or bacon

Explain how huge fireplace stones, once heated up, could heat the room and radiate heat to other parts of the house

Point out the stone "holder" on left side of fireplace, explain could have held animal fat, so when coals burn low, if add more wood, could add some animal fat to quickly cause flame to catch wood on fire

If time: Discuss fire safety. How to put out a fire – with water or sand/dirt to deprive fire of oxygen. A bucket of each would sit near the fire. Dirt used to snuff out a grease fire.

If time: Ask where in nature does fire occur naturally? Lightning (usually starts wildfires), volcano (lava from eruption)

Sample interactive questions (2-3) for the Audience

See sample questions above.

Conclusion/Review/Reflection

Ask students to review. What are three things needed for a fire? Fuel, spark, air.

Date approved by the Education Committee: _____