

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

UNIT 6

REMEMBER THE ALAMO



TEACHER'S BOOK

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION
UNIT 6:
REMEMBER THE ALAMO

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Unit 6 : Remember the Alamo

This unit of work on the Siege at the Alamo gives pupils the opportunity to :

- Hear the story of the heroes of the Alamo
- Practise research skills
- Use imagination to write a diary entry
- Find out about Scots-Irish hero Davy Crockett
- Listen to a folk song of the event
- Discuss a social issue
- Learn to 'read' and analyse a media text
- Review a film
- Create their own advertisement
- Listen to and write a rap

KEY STAGE 3 CURRICULUM

The activities in this unit would fit into work on aspects of the *General Learning Areas* of English including *Media Education* and *Drama*; *Environment and Society* including *Geography* and *History*; the *Arts Music* strand and also link into aspects of *Citizenship*.

The unit provides opportunities to teach, practise and assess some of the following skills and capabilities:

- *Critical and Creative Thinking Skills*—creativity; managing information; problem solving/ decision making
- *Personal and Interpersonal Skills*—self management, working with others
- *Communication*
- *ICT*

Aim and Objectives of the NI Curriculum

Aim

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout life.

Curriculum Objectives

The Northern Ireland Curriculum should provide learning opportunities for each young person to develop as:

1. An individual
2. A contributor to society; and
3. A contributor to the economy and the environment

Work in this unit "Remember the Alamo" provides opportunities for pupils to :

As an individual

- Be aware of their creative potential (personal understanding)
- Respect and cooperate with others (mutual understanding)
- Be reliable and committed to tasks (moral character)

As a contributor to society

- Recognise the interdependence of people (citizenship)
- Negotiate and compromise (citizenship)
- Recognise the richness and diversity of cultural influences in contemporary society (cultural understanding)
- Be critically aware of the range of print sound, moving image and graphic media (media awareness)

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Challenging and engaging
- Linked to other curriculum areas
- Media rich
- Skills integrated
- Active and hands on
- Offers choice
- Varied to suit learning styles
- On-going reflection





BACKGROUND NOTES

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION AN INTRODUCTION

The links between the United States of America and Ireland are well-known with many major American cities choosing to celebrate St Patrick's Day. It is estimated that there are some 44 million people in the United States today who claim to be of Irish extraction. What is not so well-known is that over 50% of Americans with Irish roots are the descendents of Scots-Irish Presbyterians who settled the eastern states and then moved westwards in the 18th century.

This unit of work lets pupils look a seminal and iconic incident in early American history closely associated with the Scotch-Irish. It traces the events of the siege and provides opportunities to work independently or in a guided fashion to learn more.

There are 9 individual units of work within 'The American Connection'. Within each there are multiple tasks for the pupils to complete. The seven units are:

- On Eagle Wing
- The Journey
- In the New World
- The Ulster-Scots and the American War of Independence
- The Lewis and Clark Expedition
- Remember the Alamo
- Presidential Connections
- Famous Scotch-Irish Americans
- Bringin it a tigheter

There is also additional material provided on some trails and visits which schools might wish to undertake to develop work on this theme.

Each unit includes work for one or more of the Key Stage 3 Curriculum Areas. The units can be used as stand-alone activities although they follow on from each other and working through the entire set would give a wider appreciation of the involvement of Ulster-Scots emigrants and their descendents in the shaping of the United States of America.

It is not necessary for every pupil to complete every task within a unit. Tasks are set to suit different Learning Styles so it would be useful for pupils to complete the Learning Styles Quiz (Appendix 1) before beginning so that they have some understanding of which tasks will suit them best. Pupils should be encouraged to choose a variety of different types of tasks not just their preferred learning style. There are also tasks to develop Communication and ICT skills in line with the CCEA revised Key Stage 3 Curriculum.

'The American Connection' Teachers' Notes with background and additional information are provided along with some useful website addresses. Where appropriate Answer Sheets e.g. President Word Search are included. The Curriculum Areas, Skills and Learning Styles are identified for each task and appropriate assessment opportunities have been included and assessment criteria provided.



BACKGROUND NOTES

Who are the Ulster Scots?

You have probably heard the term 'Ulster-Scots' before but you may not be exactly sure what it means or to whom it refers. It applies to those people in the province of Ulster (the nine counties including Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan) who can trace their roots back to Scottish settlers in the north of Ireland.

From earliest times there has always been movement across the Irish Sea between Ireland and Scotland. At its closest point the distance between the two countries is only 15 miles. At a time when transport by land was often slow, cumbersome and dangerous the short trip across the water by boat was a better option especially for trade. Farmers regularly brought goods and livestock across to sell in the north of Ireland.

From 1607 King James I (James VI of Scotland) established the policy of the Plantation of Ulster. Within 30 years approximately 100,000 Scots and 20,000 English had made the move and settled in Ulster. A rebellion by the native Irish population in 1641 which resulted in mass killings of settlers slowed the flow of movement across the Irish Sea for a time but by 1672 the settlers were present in such large numbers that they had established a stronghold. Inward movement from Scotland continued. It is estimated that about 50,000 Scots settled in the years immediately after the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

As is easy to understand due to their proximity to Ayrshire, it was the counties of Antrim and Down which became home to most Scots, although there were significant numbers in Tyrone and Donegal too at the beginning of the Plantation. The English settlers tended to congregate in Armagh and Fermanagh while Londonderry and Cavan had settlers from both countries. Monaghan really only had one settlement known as Scotstown.

Again, looking at a map, it is not too surprising that the areas of Scotland from which most settlers came were those near Ulster. Dumfries and Galloway, Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Argyllshire and Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, the Lothians and Berwickshire. A small number came from further north around Aberdeen and Inverness.

Ulster then in the 17th century had a majority Protestant (and mainly Presbyterian) population. The Ulster-Scots as they came to be known were engaged in trade and farming and are especially associated with the linen and wool manufacturing industries. However, due to English self-interest leading to a ban on the export of Irish products, and the Test Acts not only discriminating against their non-conformist beliefs but denying them public office, problems with land tenure with many small farmers being charged exorbitant rents or being forced off the land and finally a series of bad harvests resulting in famine in 1740-1, many of the Ulster-Scots made the move onward to America. It is their story which the students are studying in this unit of work.

The American Connection

During the eighteenth century, it is estimated that approximately a quarter of a million people left the north of Ireland and set sail for the shores of America. Most of them came from among the Scottish Presbyterians whose ancestors had themselves moved to Ulster during the years of the Plantation. This is the largest number of people from any group to leave the British Isles and move to North America in the eighteenth century.

The year 1717 marks the beginning of this mass emigration of Ulster-Scots to the American colonies. By 1775 the original emigrants and their dependents made up 15% of the non-Indian Americans in the colony, and a much higher proportion in particular states like Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky. They formed, after the English, the most influential section of the white population. Ulster Scots emigration continued into the 19th century although greater numbers of Irish Catholics were emigrating by this time. Today it is estimated that between 25 and 27 million people in the United States of America can trace their ancestry back to Ulster-Scots or, as it is often called in the USA, Scots-Irish (Scotch-Irish) roots.

The terms 'Scottish-Irish', 'Scots-Irish' and 'Irish-Scots' had been used in Elizabethan times to describe the Scottish inhabitants of parts of Ulster. As early as 1573 Queen Elizabeth used the expression 'Scotch-Irish' in a Letters Patent. 'Scotch-Irish' was first used by Americans in 1695 to refer to the newcomers in Maryland and it is often used by historians to differentiate the Presbyterian migrants from the later Irish Catholic migrants of the nineteenth century. Nowadays most British historians use the term 'Ulster-Scot'.

The first impetus to emigrate to the New World from Ulster appears to have evolved from a desire to "spread the gospel". In 1636, 140 Presbyterians left Ulster on the ship 'Eagle Wing' for New England. They faced violent storms in the Atlantic which they took as a sign of God's disapproval of their venture and so turned and headed back to Ulster. The Presbyterians also sent missionaries to North America. In the 1680s Francis Mackemie from the Laggan Valley in Donegal left for Maryland to minister to English, Welsh and Scottish Presbyterians. He went on to found America's first Presbyterian congregations and the first American Presbytery in Philadelphia.

The next movement originated from unfavourable economic conditions in Ireland which by the early 18th century led Protestant families in Ulster to consider emigration. There were five waves of emigration from Ulster to America during the 18th century: 1717-18, 1725-29, 1740-41, 1754-55 and 1771-75 which took some one third of the Protestant population across the Atlantic Ocean. By the end of the 18th century 1/4 million people (1/6 of the European population of the USA) claimed Scots-Irish descent.

Before 1770 many emigrants travelled as indentured servants and ended up working as labourers at the very edge of the new frontier, facing all kinds of dangers. After 1783 more emigrants were fare-paying. They had skills which they were hoping to use to make their fortunes in a new land. The emigrants left from the ports of Belfast, Londonderry, Larne, Newry and Portrush. They sailed to Philadelphia, Newcastle (Delaware), New York and Charleston.

The sailing ships were uncomfortable and the journey could prove hazardous. The would-be emigrants faced not just the effects of bad storms and lack of food and water but also the health hazards associated with overcrowding. The journey across the Atlantic took anything from six to eight weeks, depending on the weather and also on the condition of the ship. Few ships sailed during the winter months and even in spring and autumn conditions could be harsh with many confined to below decks where they were exposed to fatal diseases in the cramped conditions. Many were ill but in fact in spite of the dangers only a small percentage of the many thousands who set out did not survive to see their new homeland.

Their first destination in the years from 1717-1720 was New England. Here they were not well received. Contemporary reports speak of them as "uncleanly, unwholesome and disgusting"! In New England they were a minority group among the mainly English settlers but even here they made a valuable contribution to the society as Indian-fighters and pioneers.

The emigrants from Ulster landed in large numbers in Philadelphia and the other Delaware ports from 1724 onwards. This area around the coast had already been peopled by the Quaker followers of William Penn. The area immediately adjoining this had been populated by mainly English, Welsh and German emigrants so the new arrivals headed further west across the Susquehanna and into Cumberland County. This area was to become their main focus in the New World. The townships of Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone were all established there. From here they moved into the Shenandoah Valley, on into Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee and into the entire south west of the country. Other groups of Ulster Scots headed west to the Alleghenies and on into what is now south west Pennsylvania, Ohio and ever westwards.

It has been claimed that the middle colonies were the most significant source of cultural identity in the emerging country. South and west Pennsylvania, which was mainly fashioned by its Ulster Scots inhabitants, became the cradle of the Middle West. The Presbyterian emigrants clung to their belief in the dignity of the individual and of an educated clergy which, it has been argued, underlies the American passion for education.

More than 1/4 of the Presidents of the United States of America have come from Ulster-Scots roots. Indeed, when we consider the size of the country, the province has had an inordinate influence on many aspects of life and society in America. One historian has said that they made three contributions to colonial America—they settled the frontier; they founded the kirk and they built the school. It is clear that both before and after the American Declaration of Independence they helped to shape the character of the emerging nation. Many of George Washington's closest aides and generals were either Ulster-born or first or second generation Ulster-Scots Americans. The Scots-Irish played an important part in the American Revolution, the Signing of the Declaration of Independence and in the shaping of the American Frontier as well as contributing to American society through commerce, industry and the Arts. Figures such as Sam Houston, Francis Makemie, Davy Crockett, Andrew Mellon, William Tennent, William Randolph Hearst and Mark Twain were all from Ulster-Scots roots.



BACKGROUND NOTES

Unit 6 : THE ALAMO

The Siege of the Alamo has gone down in the annals of American folklore. It lasted just 13 days from Tuesday, 23rd February 1836 to Sunday, 6th March but the heroic stand taken by the Texians continues to hold the imagination. At least two films have been made of the story. The most famous is probably the John Wayne version released in 1960 and starring Wayne himself as Davy Crockett. It is a romantic hagiographic depiction of events which presents the defenders as larger-than-life martyrs. It won the Oscar for Sound and received 8 others nominations including Best Picture. A more recent film produced by Ron Howard and starring Billy Bob Thornton as Crockett and Denis Quaid as Sam Houston was released in 2004.

THE HISTORY

The Misión San Antonio de Valero was constructed beginning in 1724 and for nearly 70 years was home to missionaries and their Indian converts. In 1793, the Spanish authorities gave it and its land to the native Indians. In the early 1800s, the Spanish stationed a cavalry unit within its walls and it was at this time that the name 'Alamo' came into use. The soldiers called it after their home town of Alamo de Parras, Coahuila. During the 10 years of Mexico's fight for independence, the Alamo served as a base for both Royalists and Revolutionaries.

EVENTS LEADING TO THE SIEGE

In 1835 General Cos and the Mexican Army troops occupied the Alamo church and compound and began preparing to use the area as a military fort. The immigrant settlers and local Tejanos who were rebelling against the authority of the Mexican government defeated these troops and occupied the compound.

Lt. Col. James Neill was in command of the Texian volunteer troops at the Alamo and he began making preparations to defend it against the Mexican Army under Santa Anna. However, Neill left to attend to his sick wife and William Travis took over command. The scene was now set for the Siege of the Alamo in 1836.

THE SIEGE

The siege lasted 13 days. Santa Anna could have chosen to bypass the fort. Instead he regarded the Texians as little better than pirates fighting legitimate Mexican authority. The Texians looked upon Santa Anna as a dictator. The men inside the Alamo did not know that Texas had declared independence on 2nd March and it was the outcome of the Siege at the Alamo along with another one where 400 men died that galvinised the Texians into resistance. The rallying cry at the Battle of San Jacinto on 21st April where General Sam Houston had a decisive victory which won Texas' independence was "Remember the Alamo!"

There are many websites which give day-by-day detailed accounts of the events of the siege.

THE SCOTS-IRISH AND THE SIEGE —

DAVID "DAVY" CROCKETT

We mainly picture "The Lion of the West", as was his nickname, as a wild frontiersman; an American icon dressed in a racoon hat. He was a renowned adventurer, a bear hunter and Indian fighter but he had also represented the state of Tennessee in Congress. He had been born in that state in 1786 and ran away from home at an early age to escape school. He married Mary (Polly) Finley in 1806 and had two sons named John Wesley and William and a daughter called Margaret. After his election to the Tennessee legislature in 1821, he served for six years before winning his place in the House of Representatives, serving two terms there. (And later a third term).

By the early 1830s, Davy Crockett was a national figure. His story had been told in a book and a play and his larger-than-life exploits were the stuff of legends. When he lost his bid for a fourth term in Congress he decided to give up politics and is reported to have said: "You may all go to Hell and I will go to Texas." Thus he ended up at the Alamo.

His legendary exploits continued there with survivor Susanna Dickenson reporting his fiddle playing roused the besieged men to fight on. Again eye witness accounts state he was one of the last men standing and he and six others continued fighting until they were surrounded. Santa Anna ordered the execution of the survivors and there is some evidence that Crockett and the others were hacked to death by swords.

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

Houston did not take part in the siege itself but his name is associated with it because of his leadership at the Battle of San Jacinto where the Texians gained their revenge. Houston's family roots lie in the Ballyboley/Ballynure/Brackbrachan area between Belfast and Larne in County Antrim.

Sam Houston was born in Virginia on 2nd March 1793 but spent much of his early life in Tennessee. There, he knew the Cherokee Indians. When war broke out with England, Houston enlisted and was soon made sergeant. He excelled in the military and quickly won the admiration of his men and his superiors. He eventually reached the rank of first lieutenant before resigning in 1818 to study law. He was elected to the US Congress in 1823 and, in 1827, as Governor of Tennessee. When his marriage split up, Houston resigned from politics and returned to live with the Cherokees. There he remained until 1832 when he moved to Texas.

In Texas, Houston was elected as a delegate to the Convention of 1833 at San Felipe. From this time, he became an important figure in the story of Texas. In 1835 he was appointed general of a military district. He became a member of the Convention in 1836 which declared independence from Mexico and he was elected commander-in-chief of the armies of Texas.

Houston immediately took charge of the Texas forces after the fall of the Alamo and led it at the Battle of San Jacinto where, on April 21st, 1836, they defeated Santa Anna and gained Texas independence. Later that same year, Houston was elected the first President of the Republic of Texas. After Texas became a state of the USA in 1845, Houston was elected Senator to represent Texas in Congress and, in 1859, Houston was elected Governor of the State of Texas.

USEFUL WEBSITES

THE ALAMO

<http://www.thealamo.org/>

<http://www.americanwest.com/pages/alamo.htm>

<http://www.thealamofilm.com/>

<http://www.jman5.com/alamocam.htm>

<http://www.drhl.org/History/index.asp>

<http://members.tripod.com/aries46/alamo.htm>

http://www.apple.com/trailers/touchstone/the_alamo/

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/alamo/>

<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/AA/qa2.html>

DAVID CROCKETT

<http://www.lsjunction.com/people/crockett.htm>

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/railton/projects/price/acrocket.htm>

<http://www.talewins.com/Browzer/Crockett/>

<http://www.aboutfamouspeople.com/article1024.html>

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~tngibson/Generation/DavyBio.htm>

THE 13 DAY SIEGE CLOZE TASK

Having heard or read the story of the Siege at the Alamo fill in the blanks in the following account of the siege.

The siege began on Tuesday 23rd February 1836. The leader of the Mexican forces was Santa Anna. Inside the Alamo command was shared by William Travis and Jim Bowie. The Mexicans played music to keep the Texians inside the mission awake.

A message was sent to Sam Houston asking him to send reinforcements to help defend the Alamo.

The Mexicans tried to cut off water supplies to the mission. The mission got its water from the San Antonio river. On Day 6 Davy Crockett took part in a duel between two instruments. They were a fiddle and a set of bagpipes.

The final battle of the siege began at 1 am on Sunday 6th March 1836. Travis was killed by a head wound. Legend has it that Davy Crockett was one of the men sentenced to death after the battle.

This is not the end of the story. Remember the Alamo became a rallying cry for the Texians and they took their revenge by defeating the Mexicans at the battle of San Jacinto just a few weeks later.

FACTFILE

Find the information to fill in the following details.



NAME: DAVID CROCKETT

NICKNAME: Davy or King of the Wild Frontier

Year of birth: (17th August) 1786

Place of birth: Limestone, East Tennessee

Where in Ulster his family originated:

Tyrone/Donegal

Name of wife: Polly (Finlay) and second wife Elizabeth Patton

Names of children: 2 sons—John Wesley and William

Musical instrument played: Fiddle

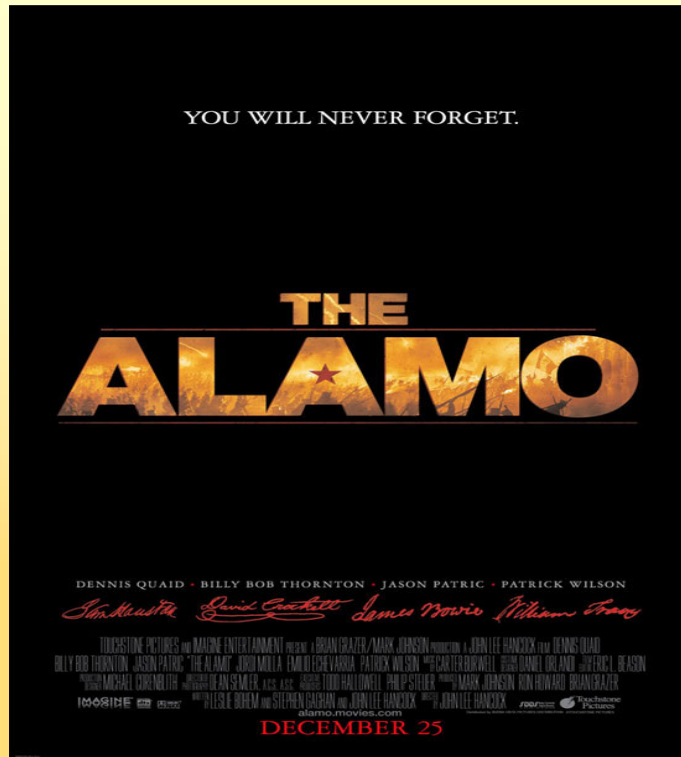
Name of TV series Walt Disney made about him: Davy Crockett Indian Fighter

Motto: "Be always sure you are right, then go ahead"

Extension Activity

Davy Crockett was a politician before he became a national hero. He served in the House of Representatives. Find out who represents that state in the House of Representatives today.

'READING' A FILM POSTER



- 1 The colours in an advertising poster are very important. What colours are used in this poster? What is their significance; why do you think these particular colours have been used?

Black—threatening/danger/darkness/death
Red—blood/fire/danger
Yellow—heat/sun/thirst/fire/corn fields

- 2 The poster features both the names of the main actors and the roles they play. The characters' names are written as signatures. Why do you think it has been done this way?

Perhaps to suggest they were actual people not just fictional characters/ underline the authenticity of the storyline/ bring the characters to life for us

- 3 Why is the centre area of the letter 'A' in the shape of a star?

Texas is known as the "Lone Star State"
Just one star—standing alone/isolated
A star—a beacon/ symbol of hope

- 4 What is the slogan or tagline for the poster and the film? What does this remind the reader of?

The tagline "You will never forget" echoes the contemporary war cry of "Remember the Alamo" which roused the soldiers as they went into battle.

ASSESSMENT GRID FOR DIARY ENTRY

ASSESSMENT GRID FOR CHAT SHOW ROLE PLAYING ACTIVITY

ASSESSMENT GRID FOR FILM REVIEW

Assessment grid for Creating a Radio advertisement