

ENRICHING THE STUDY
of
WESTWARD EXPANSION THROUGH MUSIC

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF DANBURY STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

American history is accepted as the field of Social Studies taught in most fifth grades. Its purposes include teaching democratic principles, cultural values, and geographic understandings, and enriching those teachings in many ways. One method of enrichment is through music.

A study of the westward expansion and the settling of the United States in a span of a little more than a century is fertile with facts and songs of interest to the nine and ten year old. He is a hero-worshipper, an adventurer, a river-boat man, a cowboy, and a trail-blazer who will find vigor, humor, strength, and fortitude in the stories and songs of the growth of his country.

It is the purpose of this paper to discuss the routes of expansion from the Appalachian Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, to think of great personalities who dominated activities at this time, and to consider occupations that aided that expansion. Suggestions will be made throughout to enrich the social studies program by the use of suitable songs, folk or composed, that were sung at a particular time or whose lyrics add information to the subject.

This teacher's guide does not pretend to be a course of study, a manual of methods of teaching, a song book, nor even

a complete anthology of songs to be presented at every change of subject matter. It is, instead, a suggestive listing of many types of songs gathered with bits of information concerning the historical period under discussion. It is written primarily for assistance for the teachers of the elementary school of Woodbury, Connecticut, but might easily prove valuable to others who teach American History.

In the subsequent chapters, songs are designated by numbers in parentheses, as (1), which indicates that that song is to be found in a list at the end of the chapter. Additional songs will also be found there, although they may not be directly mentioned in the body of the chapter.