

Stagecoaches in Kentucky History



Stagecoach crossing the Kentucky River by ferry, 1900-1915

In this activity packet, we will recreate the stagecoach journey many Kentuckians made in the 19th century. We will also learn vocabulary.

This packet is intended for fourth grade students and covers Kentucky history and geography. It can be completed individually or within a group.



Table of Contents:

1. Background Information
2. Stagecoaches in Kentucky
3. Life on the Stagecoach
4. Concord Coach
5. Age of Stagecoaches and its End
6. Create a map of Kentucky!

SS-04-2.1.1

Students will identify early cultures (Native American, Appalachian, pioneers) in Kentucky and explain their similarities and differences.

SS-4-GC-S-1 (b)

Explain and give examples of services state governments provide (e.g., state police and fire protection, state parks, highway maintenance, snow removal)

SS-04-4.3.2

Students will describe how advances in technology (e.g., dams, reservoirs, roads, irrigation) allow people to settle in places previously inaccessible in Kentucky.

SS-04-4.4.1

Students will explain and give examples of how people adapted to/modified the physical environment (e.g., natural resources, physical geography, natural disasters) to meet their needs during the history of Kentucky and explain its impact on the environment today.

SS-04-4.4.2

Students will describe how the physical environment (e.g., mountains as barriers or protection, rivers as barriers or transportation) both promoted and restricted human activities during the early settlement of Kentucky.

SS-04-5.2.3

Students will compare change over time in communication, technology, transportation and education in Kentucky.

Below is an image of the stagecoach that traveled from Monticello to Burnside, Kentucky



For well over a century of American History (19th centuries), the stagecoach served as the main mode of transportation. Stagecoaches, or simply coaches, delivered goods, mail, and passengers to cities and towns throughout the eastern United States and later out west. Up to nine people, including the driver, could fit in the larger coaches, and some trips could take days or even weeks to reach their destination. Stagecoaches could travel at about ten miles per hour. Riding horseback was much faster, but one could not carry nearly as much cargo. Riding in a coach was much different than our experience riding in cars today. Coaches could not have glass windows, as the rocky and rough roads would have broken them. Leather shades on the windows would block sunlight, but dust, heat and cold would make the trip very unpleasant. Also, the lack of seat belts would cause you to bump into the person seated next to you constantly.

The Beginning of Infrastructure

So how were the roads for Stagecoaches developed? Highways and roads today are public property, or owned by the government. With the unsettled lands of the early United States, many routes would pass through private properties. Stagecoach companies paid a toll* to land owners to pass through their property, and in return, the landowners would develop and maintain adequate roads for them to pass. These “roads” were often very muddy and difficult for travel. The Kentucky state legislature saw a need for improved “stagelines” and budgeted funds for road improvement in 1795. Many roads would still be closed off during the winter months, and horseback was still the preferred method of travel until several years later when the road quality improved.

Did you know?

Mary Todd Lincoln’s grandfather, General Levi Todd, was the first person in Lexington to own a carriage.

What is the difference between a carriage and a stagecoach?

A stagecoach is meant for long trips and are generally more rugged and stronger than carriages. Carriages have thinner wheels and are primarily meant for travel within a town or city, such as a trip to the grocery store. Think of the tires of a mountain bike versus a street bike. The mountain bike has thicker tires and is more durable.



Stagecoach



Carriage

On Wednesday, August 9, 1803, a gentleman by the name of **John Kennedy** opened the first Stage Coach line that ran on a regular schedule. It ran weekly, on Thursdays, and went to **Olympian Springs**, a popular vacation spot. When disease became a problem in Lexington during the 1830's, many people from Lexington went to Olympian Springs to avoid getting sick.

Each passenger was allowed to have ten pounds of luggage with them. Mr. Kennedy was aware that the roads made travel very uncomfortable, and he spent a lot of money to improve the conditions. From this point on, Lexington citizens could carry more luggage with them than those who rode on horseback.



What was it like to ride in a Stagecoach?

As stated before, these trips could be difficult for passengers. Windows lacked protection, except for a piece of leather. Because of this, you would get cold in the winter, hot in the summer, and wet during storms. Many times, the stagecoach would get stuck on the side of the road or in the mud, and passengers would have to get out and help push the coach back onto the road! On overnight trips, stagecoach drivers would stopover at Inns. Most of the trips in Kentucky could be made in one day. To do this, these coaches often left at 4:00 in the morning!

J. Kennedy,
RESPECTFULLY informs the public, that he has commenced running his *Stage Coach*, on the line between Lexington and the Olympian Springs, at Mud-Lick, and purposes starting regularly from Lexington, every Thursday morning, at Four o'clock precisely, to arrive at the Springs the same day. Passengers may engage places, with K. Bradley, at the Stage-Office, in Lexington.

	S.	D.
To the Springs,	21	
Mount Sterling,	15	
Winchester,	9	
With Mr. Galloway, Winchester,		
To the Springs,	15	
Mount Sterling,	7	6
Lexington,	9	
With Mr. Simpson, Mount Sterling,		
To the Springs,	9	
Winchester,	7	6
Lexington,	15	
With Mr. Botts, at the Springs,		
To Mount Sterling,	9	
Winchester,	15	
Lexington,	21	

Each passenger will be allowed 10lbs. baggage, and for all extra baggage from Lexington to the Springs, will be charged three cents per pound—From Winchester to do two cents per pound—And from Mount Sterling to do. one cent per lb.—Or one cent per lb. between any two of the adjoining places—He will also undertake to convey packets of papers, &c. at a reasonable rate.

He anticipates meeting encouragement in the undertaking as he has already expended upwards of 2,000 dollars in starting it, and assures the public that he will continue to add every possible convenience which he may hereafter find necessary, for the better accommodation of passengers.

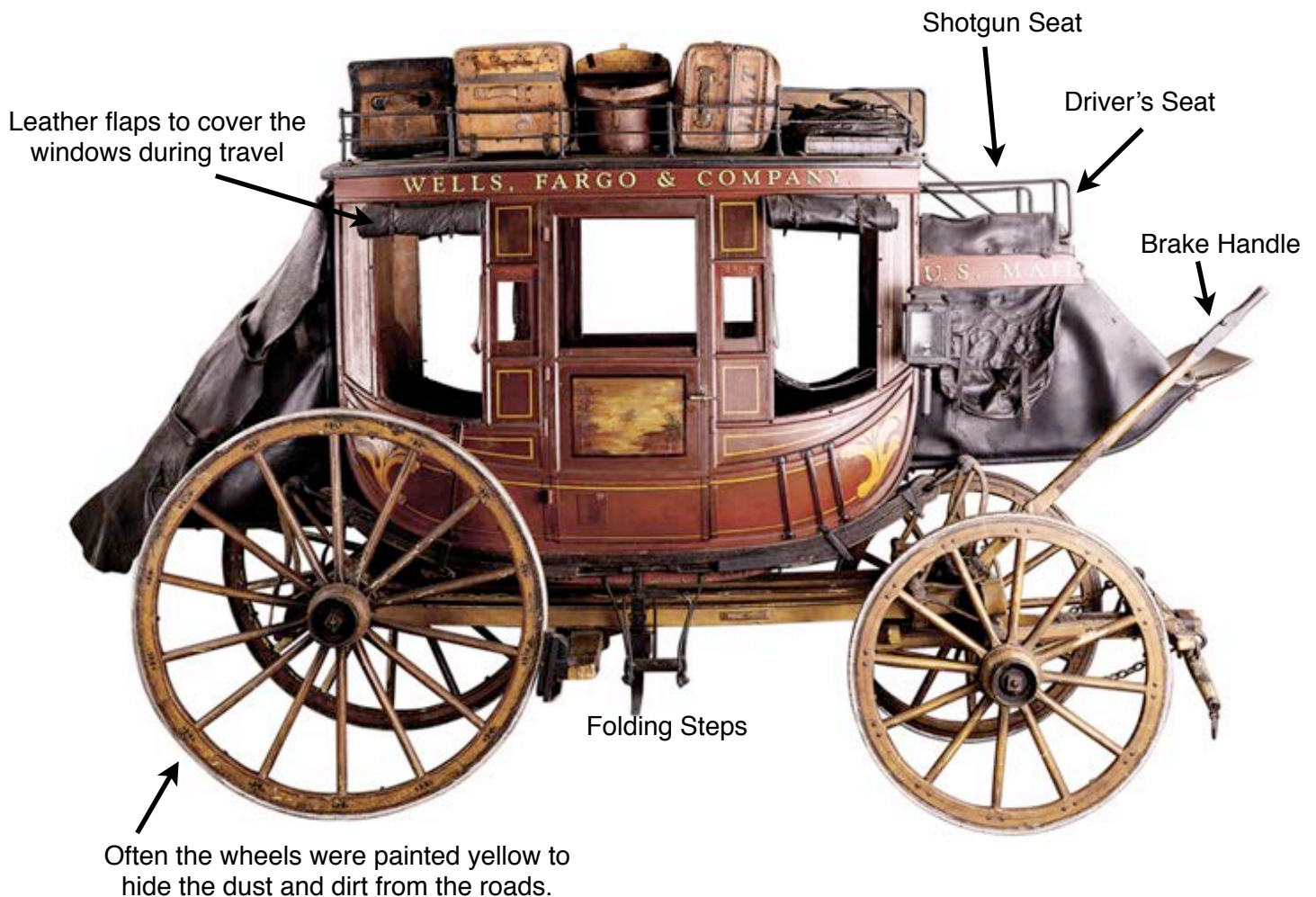
N. B. J. K. purposes running his Stage between Lexington & Frankfort, during the next session, of assembly.

Lexington, 31st July, 1803.

The Concord Coach

The Best Ride for Travel in Kentucky

The Concord Coach was a major part of Kentucky history, and Kentucky is known for its **innovations** in travel.



Did you know?

Have you ever called "shotgun" in a car? This term is from Kentucky! The Shotgun Seat on the Concord Coach was right next to the driver, and this person was responsible for the coach's security. The person in the Shotgun Seat would protect the passengers from thieves and American Indians. Both were big risks in early Kentucky history!

The Age of Stagecoaches and its End

Stagecoaches were the main form of transportation for a few decades until the Railroad, which was much quicker, came to Kentucky.


Below are the average times the Stagecoach would take to travel within Kentucky:

- Lexington to Frankfort → 4 hours
- Lexington to Louisville → 11 hours
- Lexington to Covington → 11 hours
- Lexington to Paris → 2 hours
- Louisville to Nashville → 33 hours
- Louisville to Frankfort → 7 hours

The End of the Stagecoach Era

The first successful railroad in Central Kentucky opened in 1848 and ran from Lexington to Frankfort. The last "stage" to run in all of Kentucky ran from Burnside to Monticello in 1915. Railroads offered a smoother travel and passengers could carry more luggage. People continued to use carriages within towns and cities, as passengers would need to get to their final destination from the railroad station.

UNITED STATES MAIL.
GOOD INTENT LINE.



**LEAVES LEXINGTON
DAILY;
AT 8 O'CLOCK, A. M.
FOR MAYSVILLE;
Running Through
IN 8 1-2 HOURS.**

*For Seats apply at their Office opposite the
the Rail Road Warehouse, or at KEISER'S
HOTEL.*

**THE OPPOSITION
GOOD INTENT LINE,
Leaves Lexington**

BY RAIL-ROAD to Frankfort. there connect
ing with the STAGES at 9 o'clock, A. M., and arriving
at Louisville at 5 P. M.

This company is supplied with substantial Troy and Lancaster coaches, excellent teams, and careful, sober drivers; all racing is expressly forbidden, and baggage or parcels at the risk of the owners thereof.

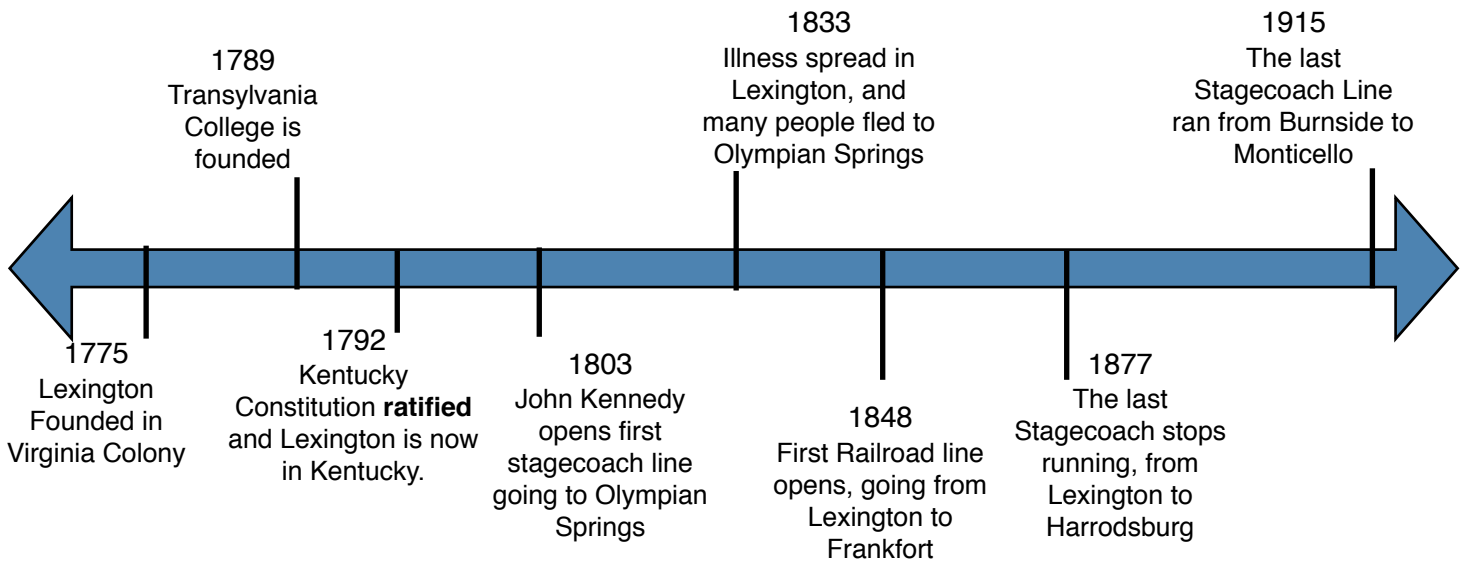
Passengers will confer a favor on the proprietors of this Line, by reporting to the agent at Louisville, Maysville or Lexington, the names of any drivers who may attempt to race.

McNAIR & WEAVER,
PROPRIETORS.

January 6, 1837. 40-tf

Activities and Vocabulary

Lexington History Timeline



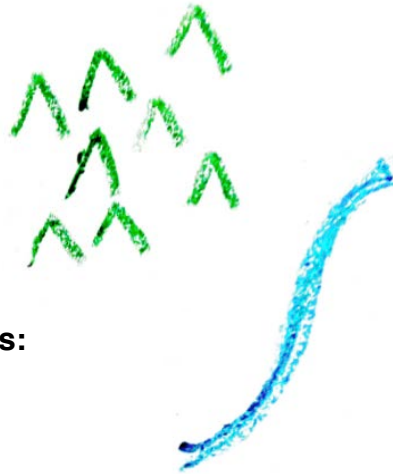
Vocabulary-

1. **Carriage**- a four-wheeled passenger vehicle pulled by two or more horses: a horse-drawn carriage. (Mainly used for travel within a town or city)
2. **Era**- a long period of history with a particular feature or theme
3. **Infrastructure**- the basic physical structures and facilities (buildings, roads, and power supplies)
4. **Innovation**- Invention in technology; make changes in something especially by creating new methods, ideas, or products
5. **John Kennedy**- gentleman who introduced the first commercial stagecoach line in Central Kentucky, running from Lexington to Olympian Springs
6. **Olympian Springs**- A popular destination in Kentucky, where people in the 19th century believed the waters would improve their health. It was a place where people escaped to when illness came to Lexington.
7. **Ratify**- sign or give formal consent to (a treaty, contract, or agreement), making it official.

Create a Map of Kentucky!

Using the map provided, locate the major stopping points within Kentucky stagecoach lines. Also, stagecoaches had a lot of trouble with mountains and rivers, so **we will need to locate the following landmarks within Kentucky:**

1. Appalachian Mountains
2. Cumberland Mountains
3. Ohio River
4. Kentucky River



Landmarks and Cities on the Line Stops:

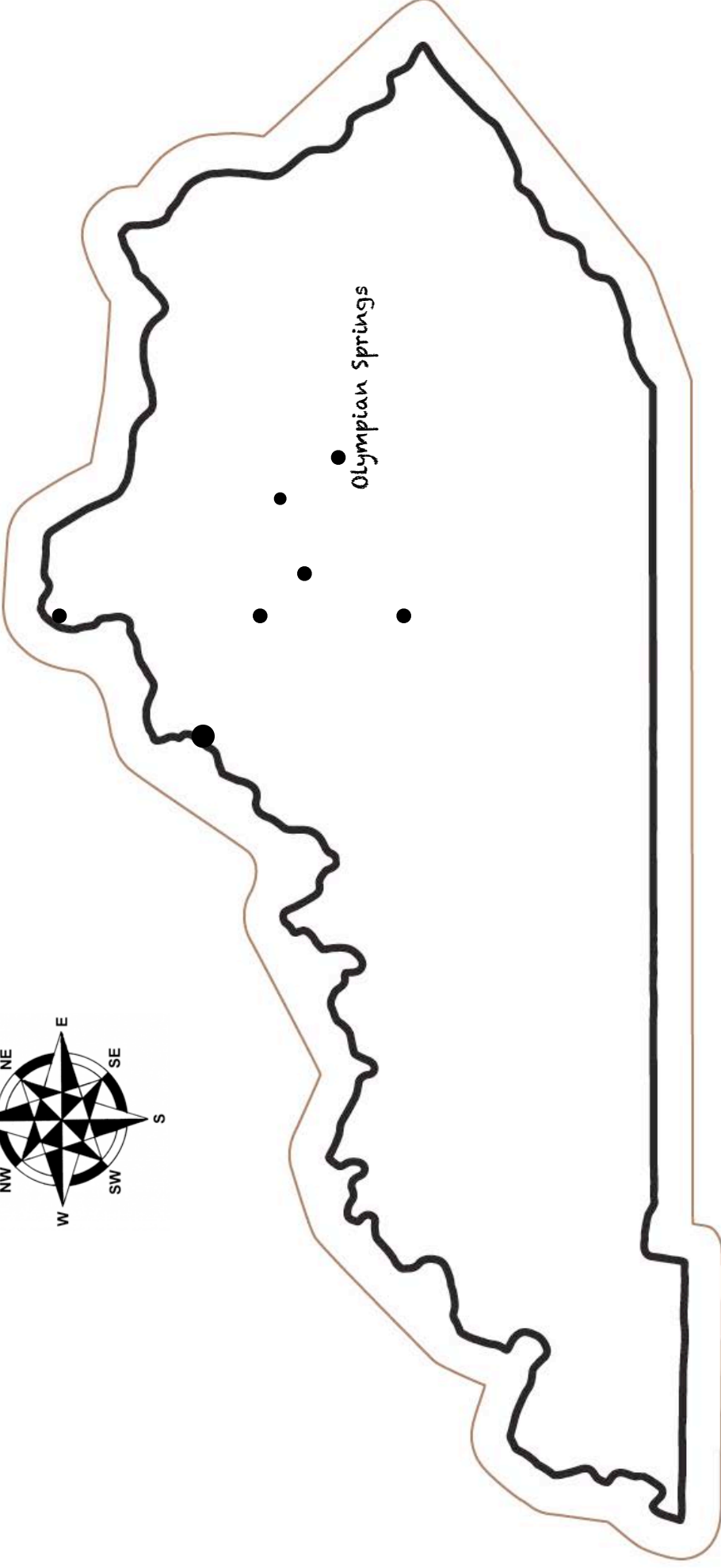
1. Lexington
2. Louisville
3. Covington
4. Olympian Springs
5. Harrodsburg
6. Paris
7. Frankfort

Questions:

1. By looking at your finished map, did the mountains and rivers make it hard to get around Kentucky? Why?

2. What regions of Kentucky were most popular for stagecoaches?

Stagecoach Lines in Kentucky



International Museum of the Horse
Kentucky Horse Park

Name: _____ Date: _____