Lesson 1: Orange County: An Overview

Lesson Overview: This lesson will provide students with a visual and audio introduction to the rich history of Orange County, tracing its origin from the early ranchos, to the agricultural boom that followed, to modern day.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

In this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify some of the people, places, and events that contributed to the growth of agriculture in Orange County.

Correlations to California's Content Standards:

- History-Social Studies: 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.2; 4.4
- English-Language Arts (Reading) 3.1; 3.2
- English-Language Arts (Listening and Speaking) 3.1
- English-Language Arts (Written and Oral Language Conventions): 3.1

Materials:

- Slide show (in PowerPoint — download separately)
- Student script for narrating slideshow
- Construction paper and coloring supplies for each student (teacher to provide)

Target Vocabulary:

- archives
- local history

Starting The Lesson – Activating Prior Knowledge:

- Discuss with students where they live, what landmarks or other significant sites are in their community, and what they like best about the city in which they live.
- Explain that they will watch (and narrate) a slideshow that will provide an overview of Orange County's history. During the slide show, explain the tremendous impact that farming and agriculture had on Orange County's development. Ask students to note specific crops, certain persons, and/or major events and episodes that they think might have contributed to the county's success.

The Lesson ~ Learning Together

- Select student or students to narrate slideshow.
- Show slideshow while students or teacher read script. If time allows, teacher can address students' questions and thoughts on each slide. You can also cut and paste script on index cards to make it easier for students to read.
- ***Note that this lesson may take more than one class period to complete.***

Check for Understanding/Assessment:

- As a class, review the information presented in the slideshow. Lead students in a discussion about their favorite photos, information that was new or interesting to them, or details that they would like to know more about.
- Refer back to the start of the lesson and ask what crops, persons and major events contributed to the county's economic success.

Beyond The Lesson – Extension Activity

- Students create the cover for their *My Orange County* history book.

- ◊ Distribute two sheets of 8 ½" x 11" construction paper to each student and instruct the students to "bind" (connect) the two pieces of paper (using tape, 3-hole punch and yarn, etc.) to make a folder. Students decorate the cover page with title (*My Orange County History Book*), their name, and pictures and/or drawings appropriate to Orange County history.
- ◊ Students keep this folder and add pages to it throughout the unit.

- Students complete the "Hi! I'm OC" coloring page and add it to their new folder.

Teacher Background

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with an overview of the entire unit, providing a general overview of the county's history, but also seeding the concept of agricultural development as an important aspect of Orange County's growth from the mid-1800s through the 20th century. Because the lesson's slideshow format and narrative are self-explanatory, a teacher background is not included for Lesson 1. However, it is important to note that the information presented in this lesson on a general level will subsequently be broken down and explained in detail in the remaining teacher backgrounds for each lesson.

You are encouraged to refer to the Teacher's Manual "Getting Started" section for further information about teaching this unit. Teachers will benefit by reviewing the brief teacher backgrounds for each lesson to become familiar with the unit's subject matter and its primary objectives. A resource reading list is also provided for further detail on subject matters covered.

Your Notes Here

Use this space to make notes about the lesson, additional resources used, teaching reminders for next time, etc.

Orange County – A Growing County Slide Show Script

[Slide 1]
Orange County is one of the smallest counties in California, but it has a big history.

[Slide 2]
The first people to live in Orange County came here thousands of years ago. They lived in little villages near rivers and streams, and found food by hunting, fishing and gathering plants and seeds.

There were two tribes in Orange County. The *Tongva* lived in the northern part of the county, and the *Acjachemen* (Ach-hautch-eh-men) lived in the southern part.

[Slide 3]
In 1769, Spain sent Catholic missionaries and Spanish soldiers to colonize California. Gaspar de Portolá (Port-o-lah) led the first Spanish explorers through Orange County, looking for places to build missions, towns and forts.

In 1776, Mission San Juan Capistrano was founded. The mission used the surrounding land to grow crops and graze cattle, horses and sheep.

[Slide 4]
The missionaries taught the native people how to farm, raise cattle and sheep, weave cloth, build with adobe, and other skills. They also taught them the Catholic religion, and how to speak Spanish. The missions were an important part of California history for more than 60 years.

[Slide 5]
Some of the Spanish soldiers wanted to stay in California and start their own *ranchos* and raise cattle. They asked the government for land.

In 1784, Manuel Nieto (Nee-a-toe), a retired Spanish soldier, was allowed to start a rancho between the Santa Ana and San Gabriel rivers. This was the first rancho in Orange County.

[Slide 6]
California was ruled by Spain until 1821, when Mexico gained its independence. Now the Mexican government ruled California. In 1834, they closed the missions and began granting more and more ranchos, so more people would come to live in California. By 1846, almost all of Orange County was part of one rancho or another.

Raising cattle was how the *rancheros* made their living. The dried cow hides were taken by sailing ship from California to the United States and England to be made into leather for shoes, belts, saddles and other items.

[Slide 7]
In 1846, Mexico and the United States went to war, and California became a part of the United States.

The Gold Rush of 1849 then brought many people to California. Now the rancheros could sell their cattle for beef to feed hard-working miners.

But eventually, most of the rancheros lost their land because of droughts, floods and land disputes with the U.S. government. Out of money, many rancheros eventually had to sell their ranchos.

[Slide 8]
Americans bought most of the old ranchos. Some of them stopped raising cattle and began raising sheep. The wool from the sheep was used to make clothing, blankets and other household items.

[Slide 9]
In 1857, one of the Mexican rancheros, Juan Pacifico Ontiveros, sold part of his rancho to German immigrants who joined together to start their own town. They named their new town Anaheim, where they grew grapes to make wine and raisins.

[Slide 10]
Farming began to replace cattle and sheep raising, and other new towns were started. By 1875, Santa Ana, Tustin, Orange, Westminster and Garden Grove had all been founded. The farmers dug ditches to bring irrigation water from rivers and creeks, or drilled wells on their farms. Besides grapes, farmers grew wheat, barley, corn, walnuts, apricots and some citrus.

[Slide 11]
In the 1870s, farmers transported their crops by wagon, or by ship from Newport Beach or Anaheim Landing (at Seal Beach), or by railroad. The Southern Pacific built the first railroad to Orange County in 1875.

In 1885, the Santa Fe Railroad reached Southern California. Now there were two railroads, and both of them wanted to be the biggest. They lowered their ticket prices, and did lots of advertising, and people started moving to Southern California from all over the United States.

[Slide 12]
As more and more people moved here, local real estate investors started new towns and new neighborhoods where people could live. Fullerton, Buena Park, El Modena and El Toro all started during the railroad "boom."

[Slide 13]
As the area grew, people here started pushing to have their own county. On August 1, 1889, they held an election, and the people voted to create Orange County.

[Slide 14]
Even though they called it Orange County, there were only a few orange trees here then. The people picked the name Orange County because they thought it was a pretty name,

that would make people think it was a nice place to live. Eventually, people did start planting more and more orange trees. The new railroads let them ship oranges all over the United States.

[Slide 15]
The orange growers worked together to build dams and irrigation ditches to bring water to their farms. The orange growers also worked together to build packing houses, where the oranges were washed, sorted and packed for shipping. They also bought advertisements to get people to eat more oranges and drink more orange juice.

[Slide 16]
Oranges weren't the only crop that did well in Orange County. By 1900, farmers were growing walnuts, apricots, celery, lima beans and sugar beets. The sugar beets were used to make sugar. There were five big factories in Orange County where the sugar was boiled out of the sugar beets. The first factory was built in Los Alamitos in 1897.

[Slide 17]
In southern Orange County, cattle were still grazing on the Irvine Ranch, the Moulton Ranch, and other big cattle ranches. In northern Orange County, some farmers raised dairy cattle for milk. Others raised chickens for eggs and meat.

[Slide 18]
All of the orange groves, lima bean farms and dairy ranches needed workers. People even started coming to California from other countries like Japan and Mexico because they knew they could find jobs here.

[Slide 19]
Oil also played an important role in the development of Orange County. The first oil wells were drilled here in the 1890s in the areas of La Habra, Brea Canyon and Olinda. Many more wells were drilled in the 1920s, after oil was discovered in Placentia and Huntington Beach. Most of the oil was used to make gasoline.

[Slide 20]
Just like the railroads made Orange County grow in the 1880s, the arrival of the Pacific Electric in the early 1900s also helped us grow. The Pacific Electric's "big red cars" were electric passenger trains that transported people and connected hundreds of towns all over Southern California.

[Slide 21]
Between 1904 and 1910, the Pacific Electric built three main lines to serve Orange County, and new towns were started all along the way. Seal Beach, Huntington Beach, Corona del Mar, Cypress, Stanton and Yorba Linda all grew up along the tracks of the Pacific Electric.

[Slide 22]
At the same time, more and more families were buying their first automobiles, and modern paved highways were replacing the old dirt wagon roads. In 1915, the first state highway in Orange County wound its way from La Habra to San Juan Capistrano. In 1926, the Pacific Coast Highway was completed, and Dana Point, Capistrano Beach and San Clemente were born.

[Slide 23]
The 1920s were good times in Orange County. But in 1929 the stock market crashed, and the United States' economy crashed with it. Many people lost their jobs during the Great Depression, and didn't have money for things like oranges, or even gasoline for their cars.

[Slide 24]
Then things got worse. In 1933, a huge earthquake rocked Orange County, destroying many buildings and killing at least four people. Then in 1938, a massive flood swept across northern Orange County, killing dozens of people and burying orange groves and farmland in mud.

[Slide 25]
After World War II started in 1941, many important military bases were built in Orange County, including the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, the Los Alamitos Naval Weapons Station, and the Santa Ana Army Air Base. Many men and women served in the armed forces, while others went to work for factories that built airplanes, tanks and ships to help us win the war.

[Slide 26]
Many of the soldiers stationed in Southern California during World War II liked what they saw here, and after the war was over in 1945, they came back here to live. Soon, many farms and orange groves were torn out, and replaced by houses and businesses.

[Slide 27]
Schools, hospitals and stores were built. That meant new jobs for teachers, doctors and salespeople. Libraries, parks and churches were built. By 1963, more than a million people lived in Orange County.

[Slide 28]
Other people just wanted to visit Orange County. By the 1960s, tourists were coming here from all over the world to visit our beaches and theme parks, like Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland.

[Slide 29]
It was Disneyland that made Orange County world famous. Some people thought Walt Disney was crazy to build a theme park in Anaheim in 1955, but Disneyland was a

hit from the day it opened. More than half a billion people have visited Disneyland, and theme parks all over the world have tried to copy its success.

[Slide 30]
One of the reasons Walt Disney decided to build Disneyland here was the new Santa Ana Freeway, the first freeway in Orange County. Just like the railroads and the Pacific Electric, the freeways helped people to get around, and helped towns to grow.

[Slide 31]
Another thing towns needed to grow was water. As Orange County grew, we had to bring water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supply our homes and farms.

[Slide 32]
Water and freeways helped South Orange County to start growing in the 1960s. New "master planned" communities were built, with places for homes, stores, schools and parks. Irvine, Mission Viejo, Laguna Niguel, and Laguna Hills all began as planned communities in the 1960s and '70s. Aliso Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, Ladera Ranch, Las Flores, and others followed in the 1980s and '90s.

[Slide 33]
All these new towns meant less and less land for farming and ranching. By the 1990s most of Orange County's orange groves had been torn out and replaced with houses and businesses. The land was just too valuable to farm. Only a few crops, like strawberries and flowers, could still be grown at a profit.

[Slide 34]
Today, Orange County is home to more than three million people. There are 34 incorporated cities. The oranges are gone, but Orange County continues to grow.

Coloring Page

Hi! I'm "OC" – Your guide to Orange County history.