

TEACHER RESOURCE

by Meredith Horn

for the Indiana Historical Society Press publication:

Alone **The Journey of the Boy Sims**

by Alan K. Garinger



INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This is a publication of the Indiana Historical Society
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450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269 USA
Teacher Resource available online: <http://www.indianahistory.org>
Book orders (telephone): (800) 447-1830
Book orders (fax): (317) 234-0562

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Overview/Description

In 1833 thirteen-year-old orphan Joshua Sims joined a Michigan Road survey crew to earn enough money to pay off his dead father's debt on his family's northern Indiana homestead. When the surveyor's ink was lost in a minor incident crossing the Tippecanoe River, the "Boy Sims" was sent on a thirty-day trip to Detroit, Michigan, to fetch more. On his journey, Sims met Native Americans, runaway slaves, bounty hunters, Irish immigrants, and encountered many frontier challenges. Sims's adventures caused him to reevaluate his beliefs and to make new friends.

In this lesson, educators may choose from several activities that help students use Alan K. Garinger's book, *Alone: The Journey of the Boy Sims* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2008). Each activity enhances student understanding of the story's historical context in pioneer America by emphasizing themes of trade, immigration, Manifest Destiny, freedom, early mapping, and citizenship.

Grade Level

Elementary (fourth, fifth, and sixth grades)

Academic Standards for the Social Studies

Indiana Standards:

Grade 4, History, Standard 1, Historical Knowledge, The American Revolution and the Indiana Territory: 1770s to 1816 (4.1.4); Statehood: 1816 to 1851 (4.1.6); and Geography, Standard 3, Human Systems (4.3.9 and 4.3.10)

Grade 5, Geography, Standard 3, Human Systems (5.3.8); and Economics, Standard 4, (5.4.4)

Grade 6, History, Standard 1, Modern Era: 1700 to the Present (6.1.15); and Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Analysis and Interpretation, Research (6.1.21 and 6.1.22)

National Standards (National Council for the Social Studies):

II Time, Continuity, and Change; III People, Places, and Environments; and IV Individual Development and Identity

Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Trade, immigration, Manifest Destiny, conflict, power, authority, freedom, citizenship, civilization, and mapping

Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- read *Alone: The Journey of the Boy Sims* by Alan K. Garinger (All Activities)
- make their own ink and draw conclusions about the value and permanency of early forms of writing and mapping (Activity 1)
- view several early maps, create their own map, and make inferences about their construction and value (Activity 2)
- analyze the definition of property in early American life (Activity 3)
- organize the major events in Sims's life into a time line (Activity 4)
- create a bio-historical poem about "Boy Sims" using vocabulary provided at the end of the book (Activity 5)
- make their own fictional travel guides/journals about a trip through their own community in the 1830s (Activity 6)
- choose a historically accurate perspective and debate major themes in the book (Activity 7)
- analyze and discuss Sims's experiences as a pioneer, road worker, and early Indiana citizen (Activity 8)
- create a character and do role-playing activities based on the characters in Sims's life (Activity 8)

Time Required

Multiple class periods depending on the classroom needs and the activities selected. Teachers may select from one or more of the activities described below.

Materials Required

For all activities: Student copies of *Alone: The Journey of the Boy Sims* by Alan K. Garinger

Refer to the individual activities for a list of additional required materials.

Background/Historical Context

Indiana became a state in 1816, and the Michigan Road was commissioned in the 1830s. As Indiana's first major road, its construction was vital to the life and fortune of Indiana's frontier lands and the area's settlers. Prior to its construction, travelers came into the state by water, by foot on early trails, or by railroad. Frontier life was difficult and riddled with challenges such as conflicts with Native Americans and Indiana's rough terrain. The new Michigan Road would provide settlers with a main road from the northern part of the state south to the Ohio River. However, the road's construction was difficult work, and workers along the way met with hostilities between Native Americans and pioneers, diseases, hard labor, and unknown terrain.

Although it is a fictional story, Sims's experiences were not uncommon in 1830s Indiana. The use of flatboats, ox and cart, and wagons for transportation allowed immigrants to come in search of cheap land. Disease, hardships, runaway slaves, and bounty hunters were all a part of life along the Indiana frontier. Garinger's story helps young adults analyze early Indiana history and evaluate their own prejudices and beliefs.

Teacher's Instructional Plan

Introduction

Introduce each lesson with background information and discussion about pioneer Indiana.

Discuss Indiana's role in transportation history, Native American history, and the development of the Underground Railroad. Explain Indiana's ethnic diversity in the 1830s and ask students what they think attracted people to settle in Indiana. What made people in the eastern United States want to risk their families and lives to go west? Ask students if they know why their family came to live in Indiana.

Next, talk about Indiana today. What makes Indiana the Crossroads of America? Do students know what Michigan Road looks like today? Why are roads so important in America?

Explain that Sims was a real boy, but his experiences are a fictional story. We do not know if all the events described in the book actually happened to him during construction of the Michigan Road.

ACTIVITY 1: Making Ink and Creating a Document

This activity should be completed before reading the book. Students will make their own ink and draw conclusions about the value and permanency of early forms of writing and mapping. Because oak galls and iron nails may not be readily available, try making ink from household ingredients.

Materials Required

- Two small glass jars (8 to 16 oz.)
- Two small glass bottles (8 to 16 oz.)
- Steel wool (enough to fill a jar half full)
- One to two cups of distilled vinegar (enough to fill a glass jar)
- One cups boiling water
- Five tea bags
- Gum Arabic (from a local crafts supply store, if available)
- Paper
- Quill pens

Procedure

- Place a quantity of steel wool in a small jar, enough to fill the jar half full. Cover the steel wool with distilled vinegar and put a lid on the jar.
- Let the vinegar solution sit for about a week, until the chemical reaction of the acid (vinegar) dissolves the steel wool to create iron acetate.
- Pour the vinegar solution off the undissolved residue and into a small glass bottle.
- In another jar, make a strong tea solution (five tea bags steeped in two cups of boiling water) to represent the “oak gall” tannin solution. Let the solution cool. Remove the tea bags and pour the tea solution into an empty glass bottle.
- Mix the two liquids (vinegar solution and the tea liquid) together to form ink. Add small amounts of the tea to the vinegar solution until it is a strong brown color.
 - Note: Gum Arabic may be used as a binding agent. If available, add a small amount of Gum Arabic to the tea/vinegar solution. If no Gum Arabic is used, the ink will gradually darken and lose its usefulness, so make it just prior to using it.
- Students may use the ink to create their own document using paper and quill pens.

Student Task

As a class, discuss the value of early written documents and maps.

ACTIVITY 2: Mapmaking

This activity should be completed before reading the book. Students will view several early maps, create their own map, and make inferences about their construction and value. Students will create maps from points in their school building.

Materials Required

- Pencil and graph paper
- Examples of early maps of Indiana from the Indiana Historical Society’s online Digital Images Library at <http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm4/search.php>. To find an image, enter the Source Collection Number or Item ID number on “The Exact Phrase” line of the search page and select the “search” button. The direct links are also provided.
 - *A New Map of Indiana with its Roads and Distances*
 - Source Collection Number: G4090_1850_T5
 - Available on the Internet at http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/dc035&CISOPTR=51&CISOBBOX=1&REC=7
 - *1830 Map of Indiana Engraved by William Woodruff*
 - Item ID: G4090_1830.W6
 - Available on the Internet at http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/dc014&CISOPTR=91&CISOBBOX=1&REC=2
- Note: Michigan Road is shown on Woodruff’s map. Beginning in Jefferson County at Madison, Indiana, it continues north to Indianapolis through Ripley, Decatur, Shelby, and Marion counties and on to South Bend through Boone, Clinton, Carroll, Cass, Fulton, Marshall, and Saint Joseph counties, then turns west to Michigan City in LaPorte County by Lake Michigan.

Procedure

- Students should begin in the classroom and draw a map that can direct other students to another location within the school building.
- Time permitting, students may present their maps to the class.
- Discuss the examples of early maps of Indiana from the Indiana Historical Society's online Digital Images Library.
 - *A New Map of Indiana with its Roads and Distances*
 - *1830 Map of Indiana Engraved by William Woodruff*

Student Task

As a class, discuss with the students the importance of early maps to the economy, technological advances, civilizations, cultures, society, and education.

ACTIVITY 3: Private Property Game

This activity should be completed before reading the book. In this activity, students will analyze the definition of property in early American life through a group activity. This activity should not be completed for a grade; it is intended to help students understand the fundamental differences between private property and shared land. By completing this activity, students will understand the security that comes with knowledge of private ownership and practice decision making. In addition, this activity will help the students understand the pioneers' desire for private property and land.

Materials Required

- Paper clips
- Masking tape

Procedure

- Make a grid on the floor out of masking tape.
- The size and quantity of squares should be determined by the size and needs of the class.
- Select a sample group from the class to participate.
- Ask one student to stand in each square.
- Begin by explaining the first scenario to the students.
 - Scenario 1:
 - Each square represents the property of the student standing in it.
 - The educator should scatter paper clips onto the grid and then explain that the students will have two opportunities to pick up the paper clips.
 - For this scenario, students do not have to stay in place in a grid square. They can move anywhere in this shared space.
 - During the first minute the paper clips are out, students may pick up as many as they want from wherever they want. Each paper clip represents ten cents.
 - During the second minute the paper clips are out, students may pick up as many as they want, but each paper clip is worth double (twenty cents).
 - Tell the students that if they decide to wait for the second minute or opportunity, they cannot pick any up during the first minute.
 - If they decide to pick up paper clips during the first minute, they cannot pick up any during the second.
 - After this activity is completed, ask students to discuss their experiences and observations, how they felt about the activity's outcome, and how it might apply to property ownership in general.

- Ask students to add up the value of the paper clips they collected individually and also as a group. Compare the results.
- Move on to Scenario 2.
- Explain the second scenario to the students. This time, they must stay on their assigned spaces and only pick up the paper clips they can reach from their position on the grid.
 - Scenario 2:
 - Each square represents the private property of the student standing in it.
 - The educator should scatter the paper clips and then explain that they will have two opportunities to pick up the paper clips.
 - For this scenario, students have to stay in one place in the grid. They cannot move to another space and will need to pick up paper clips they can reach from their position within the grid.
 - During the first minute the paper clips are out, students can pick up as many as they want, but only from their own square. Each paper clip represents ten cents.
 - During the second minute the paper clips are out, students can pick up as many as they want but they must remain in their own square. Each paper clip is worth double (twenty cents).
 - Tell the students that if they decide to wait for the second minute or opportunity, they cannot pick any up during the first minute.
 - If they decide to pick up paper clips during the first minute, they cannot pick up any during the second.
 - After this activity is completed, ask students to discuss their experiences and observations, how they felt about

the activity's outcome, and how it might apply to property ownership in general.

- Ask students to add up the value of the paper clips they collected individually and also as a group. Compare the results.

Student Task

Scenario 1: Pick up paper clips according to the teacher's instructions from any space on the grid. Students do not have to stay in place in a grid square; they can move from space to space.

Scenario 2: Pick up only the paper clips according to the teacher's instructions that can be reached from one place in the grid. Students cannot move to another space on the grid.

After each round, students will discuss what they observed, what was the reason they picked up the paper clips in round one or waited until round two, what was the total value of the paper clips they collected, and how this activity might apply to ownership of land.

ACTIVITY 4: Create a Historical Time Line

After reading the book, students will organize the historical events of Sims's experiences into a historical time line using images from the Indiana Historical Society's Digital Image Library.

Materials Required

- Fifteen cardboard pieces, each one measuring 8½ inches by 11 inches
- Color copies of ten images from the IHS Digital Image Library. Each image should measure 8½ by 11 inches in size.
 - These images are available from the IHS Digital Image Library at <http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm4/search.php>. To

find an image, enter the Item ID number on “The Exact Phrase” line of the search page and select the “search” button.

- River Scene, Falls of the Ohio River, Item ID: F353_L79_1856_136
- Pioneers, Mariah Mendenhall, Item ID: P0411_Box16_Folder2_1966.0716
- Log Cabin, 1820, drawing, Item ID: folder316_doc21.jpg
- Native Americans, Blackfoot Indian on horse-back, Item ID: BODMER_FF29-b_021
- Pioneer Tavern in New Albany, Indiana, Item ID: P0391_BOX11_NEWALBANY_005
- Advertisement for Laborers, Item ID: P0130_P_BOX47_FOLDER4_UNNUMBERED_001
- Road Construction, Wagon Train on the National Road, Item ID: P0130_P_BOX70_FOLDER2_91492
- Levi Coffin, Item ID: E450.C65 A2 1876
- Canals, Canal boat under bridge, drawing, Item ID: folder137_doc63.jpg
- Settlers, Residence of John Merrick, Item ID: G1403_C6_C6_1878_85

Procedure

- Print one color copy of each of the ten images from the IHS Digital Image Library.
- Make fifteen square cardboard cutouts, each one measuring 8½ by 11 inches.
- Number ten cards from one to ten. Leave the remaining five cards blank.
- Place the ten numbered cardboard cutout pieces on the floor in a row. These are the “time line” spaces.

- Place the five remaining cutout pieces in front of the original ten.
- These extra five “placeholders” allow five students to stand on these spaces while the other students in the group move into place on the “time line.”
- Divide the class into groups of ten. Give each student in the group one of the printed images.

Student Task

- Each group of ten students must arrange themselves in chronological order based on Sims’s life without using any verbal communication. Students may stand on a “time line” space or move to a “placeholder” space until all ten “time line” spaces have been filled in the correct order. The first card (number one) represents the earliest image in this “time line.” The number ten card represents the last image in the “time line.”
- When all the students are standing on a numbered space in the correct chronological order, the task is completed.
- Discuss with the students their reasons for placing the images in the order they have selected.
- The correct chronological order is: Falls of the Ohio River, Mariah Mendenhall, Log Cabin, Blackfoot Indian on horseback, Pioneer Tavern in New Albany, Advertisement for Laborers, Wagon Train on the National Road, Levi Coffin, Canal boat under bridge, and the Residence of John Merrick.

ACTIVITY 5: Write a Bio-Historical Poem

After reading the book, students will create a bio-historical poem about “Boy Sims” using the vocabulary words provided in the back of the book. This should be a non-graded activity. It is intended to encourage mastery of new vocabulary words.

Materials Required

- Pencil and paper
- Student Handout: Write a Bio-Historical Poem

Procedure

- The poems do not have to rhyme or have meter.
- The poem must relate directly to Sims's life.
- Make copies of the student handout to distribute to each student. The handout explains the poem's format and provides an example.

◦ Format

- Title: First and last name of the historical figure
- Line 1: First name
- Line 2: Four traits that describe this person (e.g., occupation)
- Line 3: Brother/sister of . . . or son/daughter of . . .
- Line 4: Lover of . . . (names of three ideas or people)
- Line 5: Who feels . . . (three feelings)
- Line 6: Who fears . . . (three items)
- Line 7: Who would like to see . . . (three items)
- Line 8: Resident of . . . (city and state)
- Line 9: Last name

◦ Example

Ben Franklin

Ben

Inventor, politician, ambassador, founding father

Son of Josiah and Abiah Franklin

Lover of liberty, education, and his country

Who feels curious, inventive, and determined

Who fears failure, boredom, and British tyranny

Who would like to see freedom, justice, and America succeed

Resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Franklin

Student Task

- Complete Bio-Historical Poem for "Boy Sims."
- If time permits, have students present their poems to the class.

ACTIVITY 6: Create a Travel Guide/Journal

After reading the book, students will make fictional travel guides/journals about a trip through their own community as it may have appeared in the 1830s.

Materials Required

- Pencil and paper
- Internet access
- Resource materials on local community history
 - Contact your local county historian or local historical society for assistance.
 - Contact information for Indiana's county historians is available from the Indiana Historical Society's Web site at <http://www.indianahistory.org/lhs/historianlist.html>.

Procedure

- Have students write a journal that notes important events in their own community during the 1830s.
- Before beginning this activity, introduce students to local pioneer history. Much of this material should relate to or be similar to Sims's experiences.
- Ask students to imagine that they lived in the same time period as the book (the 1830s).
 - The book should give students a frame of reference for daily life and issues of the time.
 - Additional materials provided by the teacher should provide details on the local community history.
 - Have the students keep a journal consistent with what they have learned from the book and their imaginations.

Student Task

Complete a journal for a week (seven entries) that describes what daily life would be like in the student's local community during the 1830s using the resources provided for the class.

ACTIVITY 7: The Great Debate

This activity should be completed after reading the book. Students will choose a perspective based on their research of these historical themes. Then, as a class, students will debate major themes from the book.

Materials Required

- Pencil
- Student Handout: Debate Notes Worksheet

Suggested Themes

- Manifest Destiny
- Slavery
- Property Rights
- Transportation Modes

Procedure

- Divide the class into groups—those who will argue in favor of the theme or idea and those who will argue against the theme or idea.
- Provide each student with a copy of the “Student Handout: Debate Notes Worksheet” so they can graphically organize their arguments.
- Explain the rules of the debate.
 - Each debate team will be given sufficient time (set by the teacher) to determine what they want to say, in what order they want to present their points, and who will be presenting the various points of the argument for their team.
 - Identify the specific topics and propositions for the debate based on the themes listed above.

- Establish time limits for the debate.
- Explain the parts of a debate: opening arguments, main points, rebuttals, and closing arguments.
- Make sure students understand:
 - the debate is limited to specific topics and propositions (provided by the teacher)
 - students may not use the personalities of those involved in the debate either negatively or positively
 - the time limits established for the debate
 - what a rebuttal means and how to use it
 - the criteria that the class will use to determine which group made the most compelling argument

Student Task

Participate in a team debate, arguing in favor or against the theme or idea, as assigned by the teacher or selected by the debate teams. As a group, discuss the arguments presented in the debate by each team.

ACTIVITY 8: Character Role Play

This activity should be completed after reading the book. Students will do role-playing activities based on characters from Sims's life.

Materials Required

- Pencil and paper
- Sample biographies from the school library
- Internet access for research biographies and background information

Procedure

- Divide the class into groups of five.
 - Each group will have a minimum of five characters.
 - Additional characters may be created based on the needs of the class.
- Students will write a biography for each character.
 - Examples:
 - Native American
 - Pioneer
 - Canal worker
 - Runaway slave
 - Michigan Road worker
 - European immigrant
 - Settler
- Using their knowledge of events from the book, background information provided by the teacher, and their research and written biographies, students will use their imagination to create a dialogue between the characters.
- Provide students with sufficient time (determined by the teacher, based on needs of the class) to research and write the dialogue.
- Allow class time at the conclusion of this activity for students to present their role-playing dialogues.

Student Task

Create a dialogue between the characters that is based on the biographies the students have written for each person. Students will need to do research for background information and use it to create their characters.

Assessment

Pre-Activity Assessments (prior to beginning the lessons):

- Give students a quiz using words from the book's vocabulary. Test the class's knowledge of the definitions.
- Have students explain the various historical events covered by the book. Ask students to write a single paragraph for each one of the main events.
- Have students draw a map showing how to get to the school from their house.
- Give students a map of their community and have them identify various local landmarks on it.
- Have students make a list of supplies needed for a trip "West" in the 1830s.

Mid-Point Progress Test (at the halfway point):

- Repeat the above assessments but vary the vocabulary.
- Compare these results to the pre-activity assessment results.

Post-Activity Assessments (at the conclusion of the lessons):

- Repeat the pre-activity assessment quizzes. Vary the vocabulary.
- Replace the community map used in the pre-activity assessment with an Indiana map and ask the students to locate Michigan Road on the map.
 - Note: Michigan Road is shown on Woodruff's map. Beginning in Jefferson County at Madison, Indiana, it continues north to Indianapolis through Ripley, Decatur, Shelby, and Marion counties and on to South Bend through Boone, Clinton, Carroll, Cass, Fulton, Marshall, and Saint Joseph counties, then turns west to Michigan City in LaPorte County by Lake Michigan.
- Have students list the major historical themes of the book.

Additional Resources

Web Resources

For more information on oak gall ink, refer to:

The Ink Corrosion Web site at http://www.know.nl/ECPA/ink/make_ink.html

Science in School Web site at <http://www.science-inschool.org/2007/issue6/galls/>

For more information on oak galls, refer to:

University of Kentucky, School of Agriculture, Entomology Web site at <http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef408.asp>

Publications

Clayton, Andrew R. L., *Frontier Indiana*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

Conklin, Julia S., “The Underground Railroad in Indiana,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 6 (June 1910): 63–74.

Gabin, Nancy, “Fallow Yet Fertile: The Field of Indiana Women’s History,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 96 (September 2000): 213–49.

Rose, Gregory S., “The Distribution of Indiana’s Ethnic and Racial Minorities in 1850,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 87 (September 1991): 224–60.

ACTIVITY #5

Student Handout: Bio-historical Poem

Instructions

On your own, write a poem using the following instructions and vocabulary words from *Alone: The Journey of the Boy Sims* by Alan K. Garinger.

- Title:** First and last name of the historical figure
- Line 1:** First name
- Line 2:** Four traits that describe this person (e.g., occupation)
- Line 3:** Brother/sister of . . . or son/daughter of . . .
- Line 4:** Lover of . . . (names of three ideas or people)
- Line 5:** Who feels . . . (three feelings)
- Line 6:** Who fears . . . (three items)
- Line 7:** Who would like to see . . . (three items)
- Line 8:** Resident of . . . (city and state)
- Line 9:** Last name

Example

Ben Franklin
Ben
Inventor, politician, ambassador, founding father
Son of Josiah and Abiah Franklin
Lover of liberty, education, and his country
Who feels curious, inventive, and determined
Who fears failure, boredom, and British tyranny
Who would like to see freedom, justice, and America succeed
Resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Franklin

ACTIVITY #7

Student Handout: The Great Debate Notes Worksheet

Instructions

Use the worksheet to write down your thoughts during the debate.

Theme:

	For	Against
Opening Argument		
Main Points		
Rebuttal		
Closing Arguments		
What do you think?		