



The Desert Speaks

#1002 River of Iron
Dreams of a Grand Canyon Railroad
Teacher Information Sheet

Program Description

Follow a group of modern-day adventurers on a raft trip down the Colorado River into the heart of the Grand Canyon as they retrace the historical exploits of Robert Brewster Stanton, an engineer cum explorer, who set out to investigate the possibilities of building a railroad through the harsh, extreme terrain.

Teaching Tips

1. Discuss vocabulary words
2. Introduce the episode by giving a brief summary of the program and telling students what information you would like for them to gain from viewing the program.
3. Review the information on the viewing sheet prior to watching the episode.
4. Allow time at the conclusion of the program for discussion and the completion of the viewing sheet.
5. Investigate the related web sites listed below.

Vocabulary Words

- survey to determine the exact dimensions and position of a tract of land by measurements and the application of geometric and trigonometric principles
- expedition a journey made for a specific purpose such as for exploration
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Related Web Sites

New York Public Library: The Robert Brewton Stanton Papers
Includes a short biography of Robert Stanton
http://digilib.nypl.org/dynaweb/ead/human/stanton/@Generic__BookView

Historical Backcountry in the Grand Canyon
<http://members.aa.net/~mahanay/history.htm>

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Student Viewing Sheet

Background

Robert Stanton was hired to determine if it was possible to build a _____ through the Grand Canyon. It was to go from _____ to _____ and was intended to be over _____ miles long.

Expedition Details

Stanton hoped to use a _____ instead of the traditional survey equipment used to map out the land.

Photographs were necessary to convince _____ to supply the money needed for the project.

Robert Stanton had to make _____ expeditions to get the information he needed.

The first one took place in the summer of _____. It ended after only traveling _____ miles and was ended after _____ crew members were _____.

The second expedition took place in the winter of _____.

What about the time of year made this trip more difficult? _____

Conclusion

How did Robert Stanton's feeling toward the Grand Canyon change towards the end of the expedition? _____

Who's Who?

_____	was hired to conduct a survey for a water grade railroad through the Grand Canyon along the Colorado River
_____	was the first explorer to successfully "float" through the Grand Canyon
_____	hired Robert Stanton to conduct the survey; was the first member of the expedition to die by drowning
_____	carved his initials in the only cedar tree in Marble Canyon
_____	a prospector who agreed to take mail and photographs up to the rim so that the photographs could be developed
_____	died when their boat was driven into the canyon wall
_____	a professional photographer hired to accompany the 2 nd expedition but had to leave when he was injured in a fall

Name Bank

* Hansboro and Richards * Frank Brown * Harry McDonald *
* John Wesley Powell * Franklin Nims * Felix Lantear *
* Robert Stanton *

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Answer Key

Background

Railroad
Grand Junction, Colorado
Yuma, Arizona
1000 miles

Expedition Details

Camera
Investors
2
1889
30
3
killed
1890
ice cold water, freezing temperatures

Conclusion

He began to appreciate the Canyon as a place to be admired rather than just a place to develop.

Who's Who

Robert Stanton
John Wesley Powell
Frank Brown
Harry McDonald
Felix Lantear
Hansboro and Richards
Franklin Nims

