

Patty Reed's Doll



Each month The California Museum will introduce a new artifact with accompanying information and questions, which will consist of three different difficulty levels to choose from. To be used as a sponge or opening activity, you can use the artifact of the month for your students to study, question and form ideas. You can also print the image and place it on each student's desk, have them work in teams or project the image for a class activity.

Use the provided questions to help your students learn more about the artifact and its importance to California -- or make up your own questions. Most importantly, have fun!

Be sure to check out our web site, CaliforniaMuseum.org, for other interesting and unique activities for your students.

Patty Reed's Doll



This little doll, a replica of the one brought across the prairies and mountains by Patty Reed, symbolizes the dangerous and difficult journey made by so many pioneers and the innocence of the children who made the trip with their parents.

Patty Reed was only 8 years old when her family left Springfield, Illinois, to head west to California. The Reed family was part of the wagon train known today as the Donner Party. In April 1846, the Donner Party, made up of 33 men, women and children, headed west in search of a better life, to start a business or a farmstead. The families used covered wagons, usually pulled by oxen, to carry their household items, family treasures and food and supplies for the trip. The journey was very dangerous because of the limited amount of basic supplies that could fit in the wagon, the extreme weather in the winter, and diseases epidemic on the trail. The Donner Party did not escape these dangers, and their story would go down in history.

Due to many factors, including bad directions, delays, and inadequate food and water, the members of the Donner Party were suffering. When they reached the edge of the Great Salt Lake Desert, the Reeds had to make the difficult decision to leave their belongings on the side of the trail. All the children were told to leave their toys behind. From among the items to be deserted, Patty rescued "Dolly" from the sand and slipped her into her dress. She carried Dolly with her through the deep snows of the Sierra Nevada Mountains that forced the party to camp near the summit until their rescue.

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Elementary

- 1) What are some reasons people might leave their homes and move westward?
- 2) A covered wagon was like a moving van for pioneer families. Write down five things you would take with you for the long five-month journey.

Middle

- 1) The distance between Springfield, Illinois, and Sacramento, California, is 1,964 miles and it was advertised that this trip could be made in 5 months. How many miles do you think a wagon traveled per day if it took them 5 months?
- 2) What do you think a chore would have been for you if your family had moved westward and you had to walk alongside the oxen?

High School

- 1) Think about some of the dangers that you might come across on the trip westward in a covered wagon. What are some things you and your family could have done to prepare for them?

Color the pioneer wagon!



