

PIONEER IMAGES OF UTAH

ARTIST: Danquart Anthon Weggeland (1827-1918) Salt Lake City

TITLE: *Pioneer Home or Early Days Near Salt Lake Valley* 1880s

MEDIA: oil on board

SIZE: 9-3/4" x 13-1/4"

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Danquart Anthon Weggeland was born in Christiania, Norway, in 1827. As a child he was interested in drawing, and at 16 he was able to start art lessons with a local portrait painter. Four years later he left home for a year's apprenticeship with a painter and decorator in Copenhagen and then spent the next year studying at the Danish Royal Academy of Art.

Back in Norway, he supported himself with an odd assortment of jobs, took lessons in landscape painting, made a little money painting portraits, decorated some curtains for a theater, and studied costume design to improve his figurative work.

In 1854, Weggeland agreed to attend a meeting of the recently organized Stavanger branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where he met another aspiring artist, C. C. A. Christensen. Within a year of their meeting, Weggeland became a member of the LDS church. Christensen and Weggeland both eventually emigrated to Utah and remained lifelong friends.

Dan Weggeland moved to England and served a mission for the Church there from 1857 to 1861, and then he emigrated to America. While working to earn money to move west, he studied with Daniel Huntington and George P. A. Healy, two of the most successful portrait painters in the East. These two artists both used a refined, smooth technique that influenced Weggeland's style of portraiture and gave his later portraits an elegance not found in most of his Utah contemporaries' work.

In 1862, Weggeland finally had enough money to travel to Salt Lake City, arriving in September. For the next 11 years he helped pay his rent by painting scenery for the Salt Lake Theater, and he used sketches from the trek west and drawings of Utah landscapes to create paintings that are more fluid and painterly than those of other Utah artists of his time.

Weggeland's greatest strength as an artist lay in his ability to record everyday life. He used this strength in producing murals for four LDS temples: St. George, Logan, Manti, and Salt Lake, with his best work in the Salt Lake Temple. Although better than Christensen at composing figures, he was not as effective at producing solidly modeled forms nor at conveying personality.

On the other hand, Weggeland was a great teacher of art and a founder of the Deseret Academy. Later he was called "The Father of Utah Art," and was one of the most important influences on the second generation of Utah artists-J. T. Harwood, Edwin Evans, John Hafen, Lorus Pratt, and Phineas H. Young.

Because of the quality of his work, his progressive style, and his influence on other artists, Dan Weggeland was probably the most important early Utah painter. He continued to teach in Utah and to exhibit nationally, winning gold and silver medals at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. He stayed current with artistic direction on a national level and was greatly respected by younger artists, many of whom he influenced to study in Paris, helping to establish an important tradition of European-trained native Utah artists.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

TITLE: *Pioneer Home or Early Days Near Salt Lake Valley* 1880s

MEDIA: oil on board

SIZE: 9-3/4" x 13-1/4"

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING (History, Aesthetics, Criticism)

Approximately what year do you think this painting was painted? Why? Where do you think this is? Who do you think the person in the painting is? What season of the year do you think it is? Have you heard stories of early settlers? Why would anyone be interested in a painting of an early settler and his home? Would you be more interested in this painting if it were of your great-grandfather? Have you ever seen or visited a home that looks like the one in the painting? What was it like? Would you like to live in such a home? Who do you think is in the doorway?

If you had to describe the mood of this landscape (happy, angry, sad, peaceful) what would it be? Why? What is your attention drawn to first in this painting? Why? Why didn't the artist paint with more detail? Why do you think the artist bothered to make this painting? What kinds of textures do you see? What lines stand out the most? Where are the weakest lines? Is this picture open or closed? How does the painting show the illusion of depth? What are the most important parts of this painting?

Do all parts seem necessary to the composition? Do you see any brush strokes? Is the medium a good choice for the subject? Do you think the artist is skilled or unskilled? Careful or careless? Does the artist know the subject matter?

ACTIVITIES

Social Studies/ Art

Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the various shelters used by different cultures by listing at least ten types, discussing their pros and cons, and then building their own model of a shelter used by humans.

Discuss with students the idea that shelter is one of our basic needs; and therefore, we have designed a wide variety of dwellings throughout our history. Ask why they think there has been such a wide variety, and ask if they think we have developed the ultimate dwelling yet (Let the students help determine the criteria. For example, one which can withstand weather, age, insects, earthquakes, etc.) Bring in lots of pictures to show the wide variety of shelters used in our time.

Have students plan their own dwelling and build it from whatever materials they can find (Lincoln logs, Legos, clay, cardboard, paper, etc.) Have them share their drawn plans and final products and explain to the class why they created the design they did and whether and why their model came out different from the original plan. Be sure to draw out of the discussion how our homes affect us, how we make choices of utility versus artistic expression, how the surrounding environment and climate influences the shelter, how some cultures design their dwellings to fit into their spiritual and or religious beliefs, and so on and so on.

Variation: Concentrate on one or more aspects of the activity that relate to another area of study. Also, see activities under Hafen, this packet.

Art

Objective: Students will develop their drawing skills and practice previously acquired drawing skills (perspective, shading, etc.) by doing several quick studies of a home by the school and of their own home.

Have students bring sketch pads or clipboards with paper and go to a home you've chosen in the neighborhood where the students can be about 100 to 200 feet away from the house. Tell them they have 20 minutes and have them sketch the home. Do this several times (each time with the students starting on a new sketch), and try to do it in the morning and at the end of the school day to show the effects of time of day on light. During this same time period, have the students do sketches of their own homes. When the students have at least five sketches, have them critique them and choose their best one. Allow the students to then use their choice of media (watercolor, oil, charcoal, pencil, colored pencil) to produce a final work of a home.

Language Arts/ History

Objective: Students will learn history through primary sources (journal entries) and will produce their own journal entries that go beyond just a "grocery list" entry that simply inventories what they did each day.

Have students bring in as many journals (or examples of entries) as possible from their grandparents or great-grandparents or from library collections. Bring in some from Utah pioneers of the 1880s to match the time period of the painting. There are some excellent diaries by pioneer young people such as Mary Goble Peay, that the students may find particularly interesting. You also can bring in some journal entries from famous people or perhaps your own, to have a variety of styles. Spend several days in your reading lessons reading through the journals and discussing which are interesting to read and why they are.

Discuss how historians use journals to understand what was happening at the time being studied. (For example, in [A Midwife's Tale](#), by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Thatcher demonstrates how even cryptic entries provide not only very specific information about a

typical midwife's life, but also many details about transportation, weather, clothing, community life, relationships, and families.) Have the students spend a few days keeping their own journals and then critique the entries and discuss how they can improve their writing.

Have the students pretend they are living in the home in the painting in 1884, and write a series of journal entries. Make sure they have a clear understanding of what was happening at that time in history and what that family probably had as far as necessities and luxuries. Discuss the ways the family was probably self-sufficient.

Dance

In the state core for dance, under contextualizing, students are expected to create a dance project from another art form. Please don't be afraid to explore this activity with your students. If after reading this activity you are still a little anxious, you can call the state office dance consultant for help: Doris Trujillo (801) 768-9606 or you may have local high-school or college-age students who are willing to help. Another excellent resource for dance and movement with young children is the video *Moving Freely*, by Janet Lewis. The video is available by writing to P.O. Box 70, Springville, Utah 84663-0070.

Objective: After carefully viewing and discussing the slide, students will be able to create a dance using at least four different locomotor steps, changing speed, direction, and level.

Show the class the slide of *Pioneer Home*. (You can use the same ideas given here to help the children explore movement based on other artworks. See Fairbanks Activities, Art of the West, Oct. 1995 pkt))

Have the students take off their shoes and socks (the best place to do this activity is in the auditorium or gym) and spread out in the space. Do some gentle stretching to warmup with them and then begin this lesson. Say to the students: "Imagine you are the person sitting in front of the home. Start moving around like you think that person would move around on that land and in that house." "Be sure to use the whole space. Can you move any other way beside forward? What about different speeds?"

Imagine the chores needed to be done. Show me those movements. Now can you change those from direct acting out to dance moves? How would a milking a cow dance look? Do you think any children live there? What would some of their movements be? Show me playing in the dirt and fields. Do you think the kids had chores? Show me those movements.

Remember to use the whole space and to use high, medium, and low levels. What about the rooster in the picture and the plants surrounding the home? Show me their movements. Now begin to mix all those ideas together and begin to form a dance (Some

appropriate music for this whole process could be some Shawn Colvin, bluegrass, Enya, Fold, Western, or Americana music listed in the music core).

After several minutes have the students get into groups of three or four and begin putting their dances together. After about ten minutes of practicing, allow each group to share their dance.

The State Arts Council has music and written lesson plans for early pioneer social dances which you can do with your students, but please also give your students the experience of creating their own dances. (See activities in this packet as well as past packets for a variety of simple dance and movement lessons.)
