

“Historic Camping and Teardrop Trailers” – Educator’s Guide

Snapshot:

The RV industry is largely a result of several factors that worked together in American History to produce an environment for American Innovation.

- The Progressive Movement influenced politicians to regulate business and shorten work days. This allowed Americans more leisure time and time to camp as recreation.
- The National Parks were established and well publicized. This provided tantalizing destinations for early road trippers.
- Less expensive automobiles (thanks to the moving assembly line) allowed Americans more geographical freedom.
- Since most Americans didn’t travel much, the Hotel industry was very small. This forced solutions in the hands of Americans.
- The Industrial Revolution taught Americans how to create machinery with their hands and the value of invention.

It was into this environment that Americans began solving the lodging problem –while traveling- with their own hands. They made their own tent trailers, car campers, and teardrop trailers.

Before Watching the “Historic Camping and Teardrop Trailers” Film:

- Have the students do the primary source activity (See teacher’s resources at <http://www.overlandtrailer.com/the-film>)
- Review Key Concepts:
 - The Progressive movement
 - Shorter Work Day/week
 - Progressive income tax
 - gold & silver standard
 - etc...
 - The creation of National Parks
 - Teddy Roosevelt's Efforts
 - The effects of the Gilded Age
 - John Muir's Influence
 - The Blackfeet Nation and Glacier National Park
 - etc.
 - The Moving Assembly Line Vocabulary
 - Economies of Scale
 - Interchangeable Parts
 - Specialization

While Watching the Film:

- Have the students complete the "Travel With Me" Worksheet

After Watching the Film

- Discussion Questions:
 - When would you say camping-for-fun began in American History?
 - Who made the first teardrop trailers and other campers?
 - What impact did the automobile have on camping?

- How was Glacier National Park shaped by RVs?
- What is a basic definition for a Teardrop Trailer?
- What advantages can you see in a Teardrop Trailer when compared with tent camping or a motorhome?
- What disadvantages can you see in a Teardrop Trailer when compared with tent camping or a motorhome?
- How did WWII affect the RV industry?
 - Name two reasons the industry almost disappeared during WWII.
- What Environmentally responsible concepts, ideas, or trailers were presented in the film?

Assignments and Additional Lesson Plans

- See online teacher resources for suggested student assignments, related media, and lesson plans.
<http://www.overlandtrailer.com/the-film>