



Wheat Curriculum Unit

Middle School

Resources:

- “Wheat Farming in Washington” adapted by Washington State Historical Society for Middle School Level
- “Wheat Farming in Washington” HistoryLink.org Article - <https://historylink.org/File/20504>
- “Wheat Farming in Washington” NonfictionNXNW video -<https://vimeo.com/271291934>

Suggested Reading with Students:

- *The Thing About Luck* by Cynthia Kadohata
- *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *Winter Wheat* by Mildred Walker

Vocabulary:

- AGRICULTURE – the science or job of farming, either crops or raising animals
- BUSHEL – a unit of measure for crops (US bushel = 9.3 US liquid gallons)
- COMBINE – a machine for harvesting grain that cuts and separates in one operation
- CULTIVATE – to prepare with special attention
- EXPORT – to sell out of the country
- MISSIONARY – a person sent to spread religious faith to nonbelievers
- PRODUCTIVE – the power to create in a large amount

In Class Activities:

Activity 1 – Write a Postcard!

Activity 2 – Washington Wheat Timeline

Activity 1: Write a Postcard!

As a classroom, in small groups or individually have students read either just the introduction or entire article “Wheat Farming in Washington.”

Lead a discussion with the classroom about the advances in agriculture and technology that allowed Washington wheat growers to become ever more productive.

- Introduction of grain crops in 1820s
- Improved roads like Mullan Road in 1860s
- Transcontinental railroads 1880s
- Invention of the combine in the 1890s
- Motorized machinery including the combine in 1920s (post WWI), popularized by 1940s
- GPS navigated machinery in 2010s
- Scientist developing new wheat varieties in 2010s

Have students consider how these changes might affect different individuals in the community. What might some of these changes look like? How might these changes impact how a farmer worked, planned, or sold their wheat?

Have students select one of the three postcards representing various time periods. Have them imagine they are seeing one of the advances described in the article in first person. What might that look like? How might they be affected? Have them create a fictitious individual and have them write a postcard describing what they are seeing. Suggest they write to someone who has never visited the area and would be unfamiliar with wheat farming.

See Attachment A for Postcard images to be printed front to back.



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Activity 2: Washington Wheat Timeline

As a classroom, in small groups or individually have students read either just the introduction or entire article “Wheat Farming in Washington.”

Using the article as a resource, have students place the provided images along a timeline. Instruct them to include relevant decades. Check their answers as an entire class and discuss these moments in Washington history.

In small groups have students discuss these moments in history and how they relate to each of the following groups.

- Native Americans
- Immigrants
- Small or family farmers

As a whole classroom, use wheat farming as a lens to discuss these moments in history for each of the listed groups.

Have students individually write about one of these particular groups and how advances in the wheat industry would have affected them throughout Washington history citing specific examples from the article.

See Attachment B for timeline images.



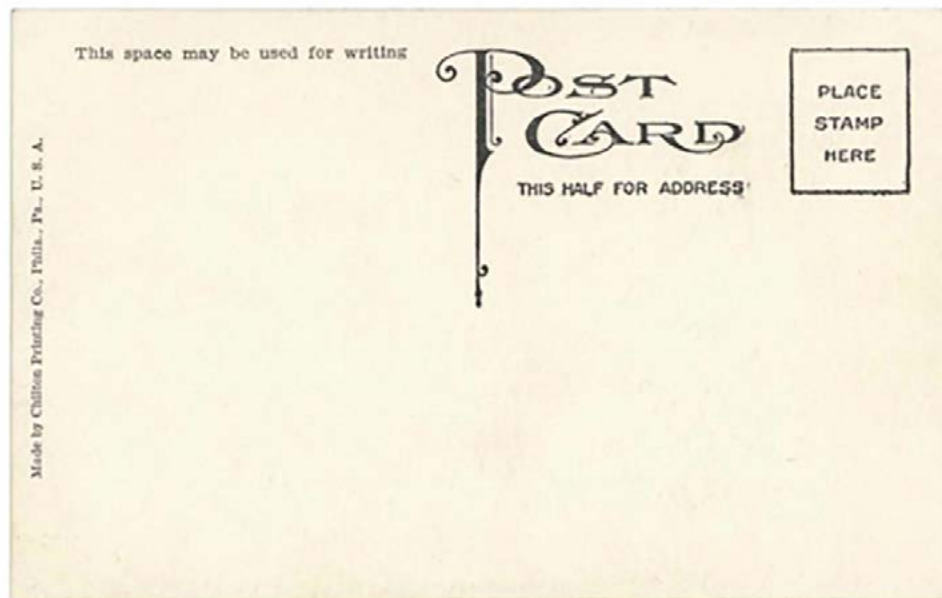
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Attachment A: Write a Postcard



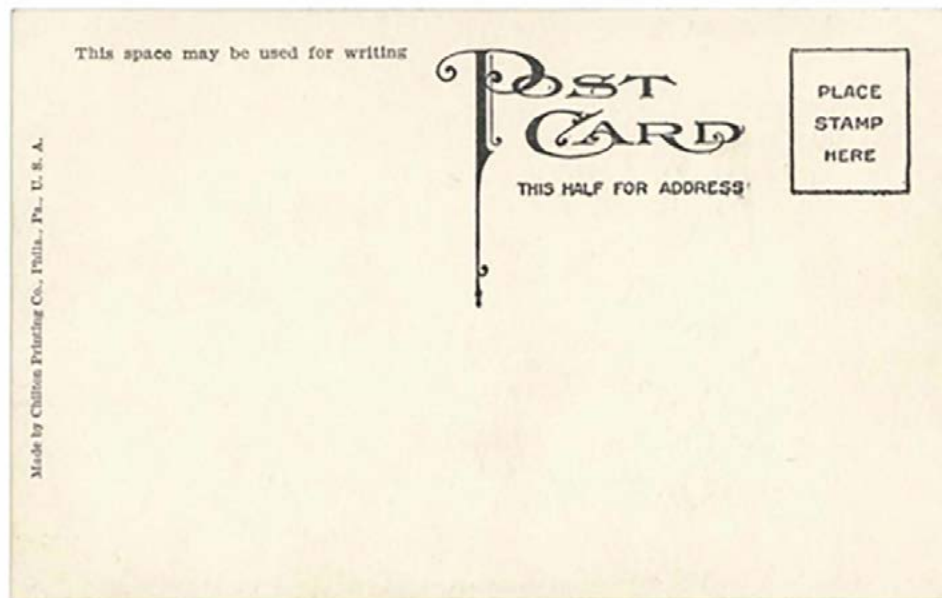
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Attachment A: Write a Postcard



A.P.R.R. Yards Ellensburg Wash 2004



NORTH BY NORTHWEST

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Attachment A: Write a Postcard



NORTH BY NORTHWEST

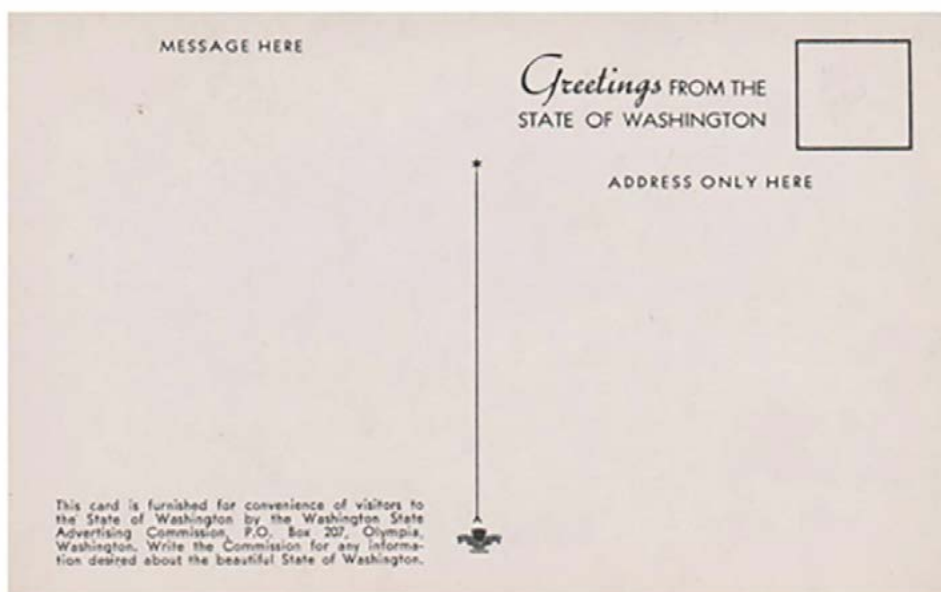
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Attachment B: Washington Wheat Timeline



Fort Vancouver



A jar of wheat seed like the one Marcus and Narcissa Whitman brought to Oregon Country



An early railyard in Ellensburg



The Washington State Seal



Farm workers with combines pulled by large horse teams



A motorized version of the combine