

HOMESTEADING BY THE NUMBERS



Kenneth Deardorf on the porch of his cabin in Alaska.

Approximately 4 million claims were made under the Homestead Act. Of these, 1.6 million were successful. The total number of acres distributed through the Homestead Act was 270.2 million. The Act was not repealed until 1976 in the lower 48 and not until 1986 in Alaska. The last homesteader was Kenneth Deardorf from Alaska. He received his patent in 1988.

Time Needed

One class period

Materials Needed

Homestead Statistics Worksheets

Introductory Set

Ask students to brainstorm laws that they know have changed or influenced American history. Students are then to describe how those laws impacted the nation. Explain that students will learn today how the Homestead Act of 1862 influenced the nation.

Process

Students are to complete the Homestead statistics worksheets in order to develop an understanding of the effect of the Homestead Act of 1862 upon the United States.

This assignment could be used as group or all-class activity with the charts being transferred to a presentation program and projected onto a large screen.

Culminating Activity

Bring students back together and have them discuss as a class the information that they have reviewed and how the Homestead Act influenced the nation as a whole.

Impacts of the Homestead Act

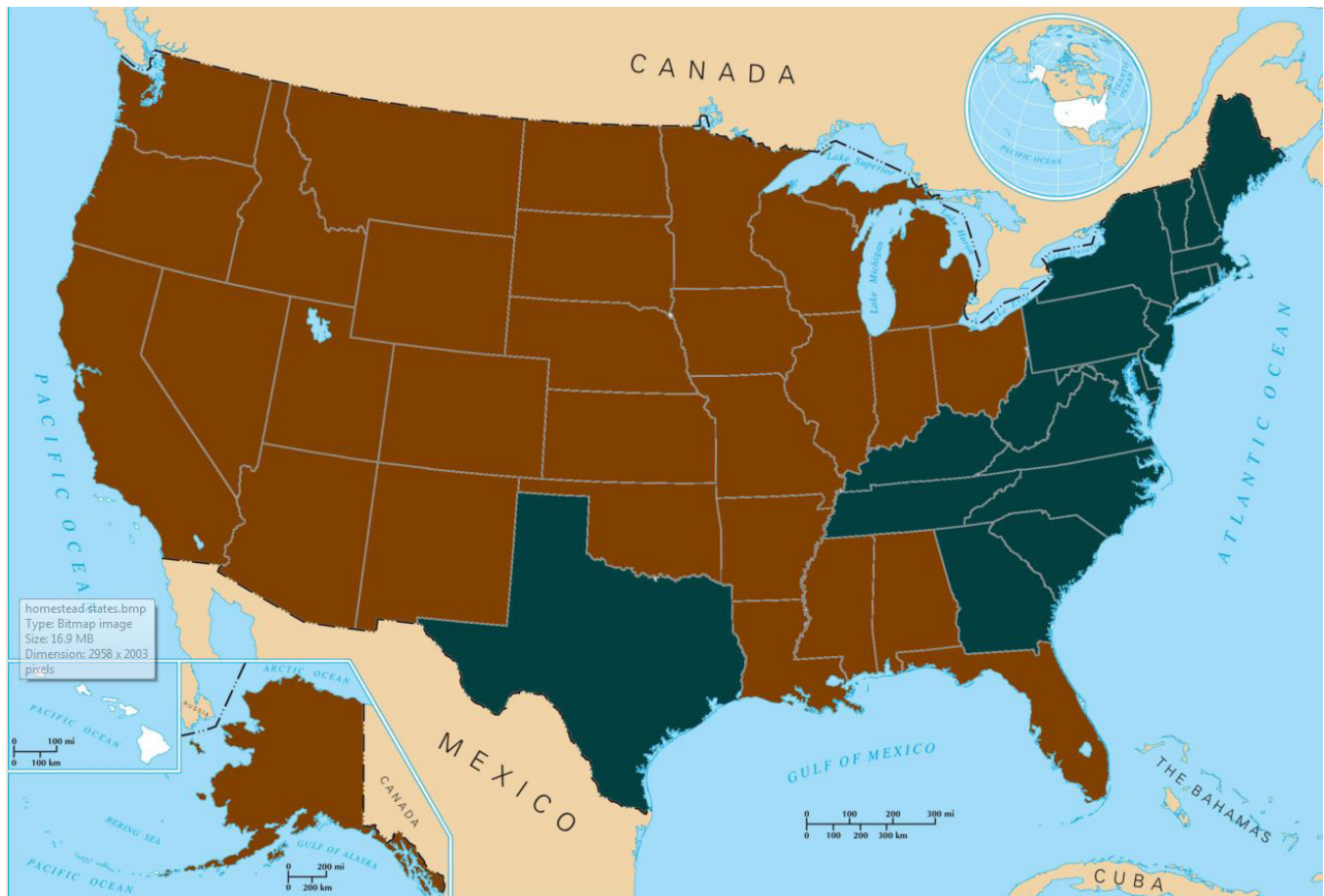


Students will learn about the impacts of the Homestead Act by watching a video that explains the impacts at:

<http://youtu.be/5KxooR9my1Q>

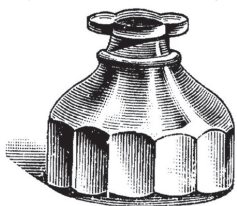
This activity can be used at the conclusion of a unit of study on the Homestead Act of 1862.

HOMESTEADING BY THE NUMBERS



The 30 states in brown were opened up to homesteading.
A jpg of this image is available at <http://www.nps.gov/home/historyculture/>

Enrichment Activities



Homesteading by the Numbers

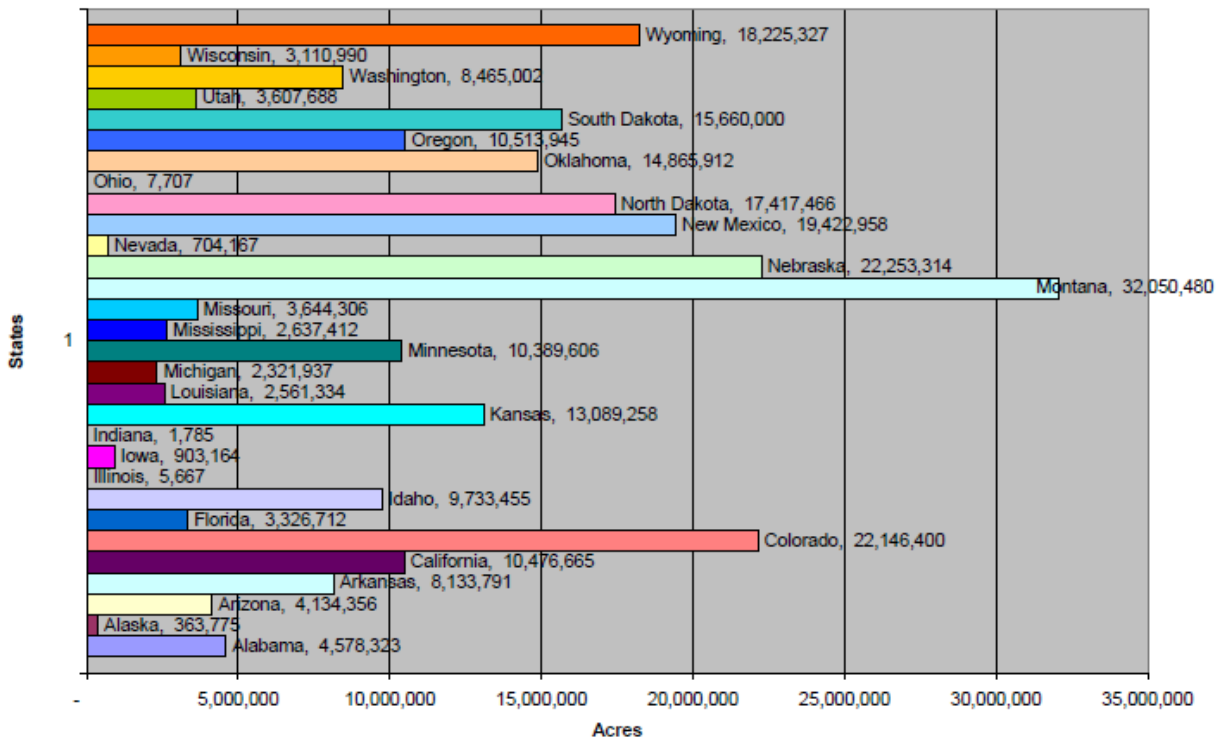
While Homesteading offered millions of acres of land for settlement, Homesteaders were not the largest recipients of western lands. Millions of acres of land were offered to the railroads for sale and use in building rail lines and communities. Research the role that the railroads played in the settlement of the west and write a comparative essay between the railroads and homesteaders.

Homestead Statistics Worksheet

Name: _____

Instructions: Review each of the charts and answer the questions that are found below each.

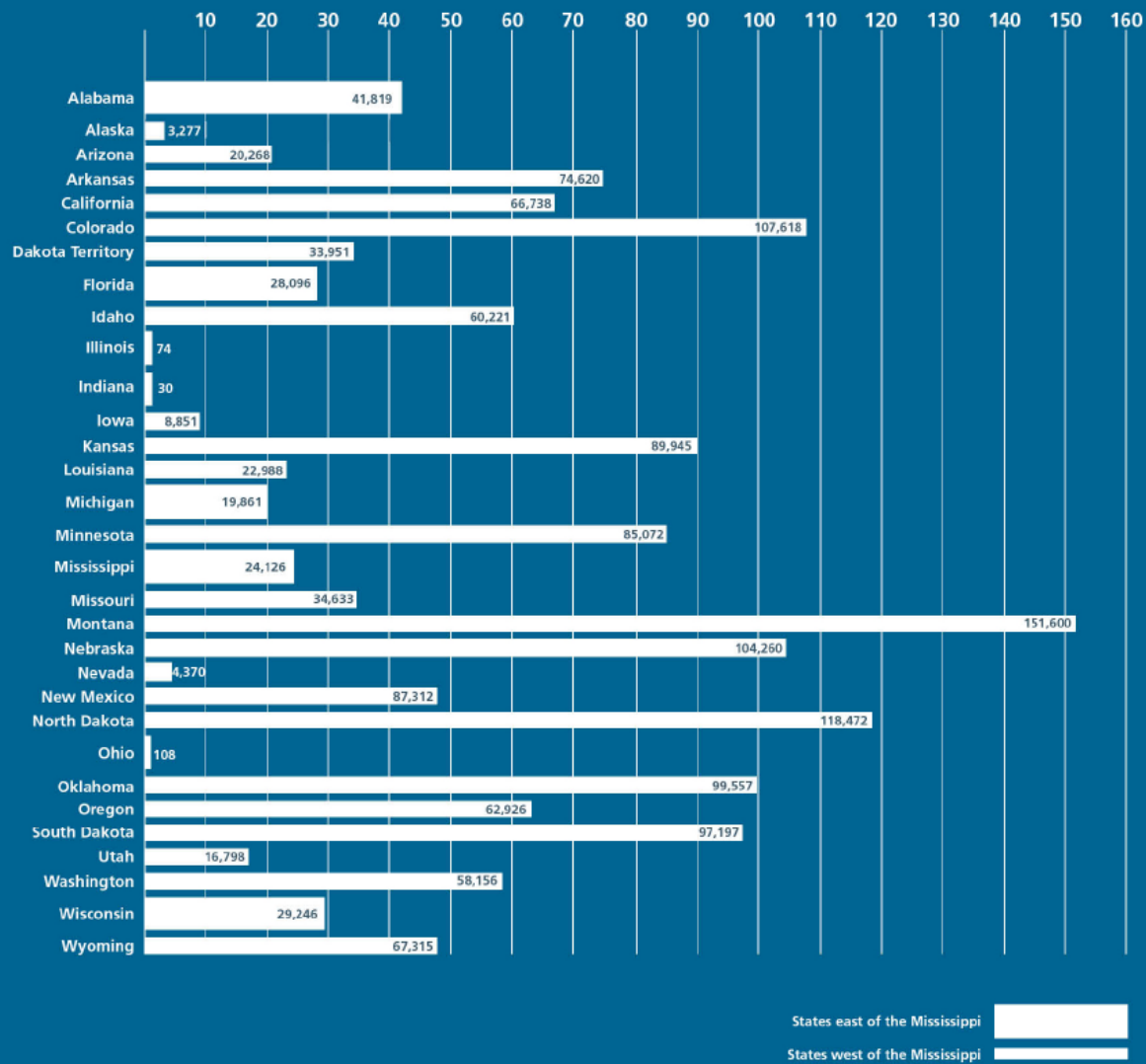
Total Amount of Acres Successfully Homesteaded in State



Source: <http://www.nps.gov/home/historyculture/>

1. List the five states where the most acres were claimed.
2. List the five states where the fewest acres were claimed.

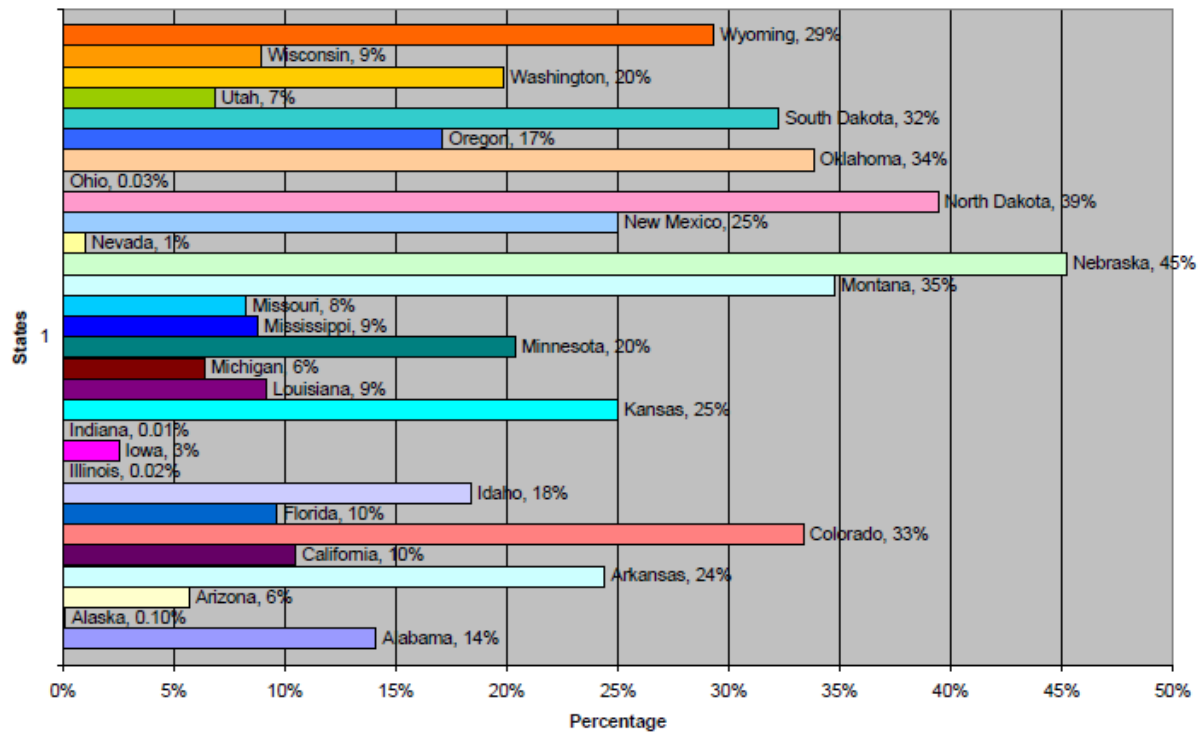
Homesteads that Successfully "Proved Up" by State



Source: <http://www.nps.gov/home/historyculture/>

1. In how many states did successful Homestead claims occur?
2. In how many states west of the Mississippi River were successful claims made?
3. In how many states east of the Mississippi River were successful claims made?

Percentage of Total Acreage in State that was Successfully Homesteaded



Source: <http://www.nps.gov/home/historyculture/>

1. Which state had the highest percentage of its land claimed under the Homestead Act?
2. Which states had less than 5 percent of their land claimed under the Homestead Act?
3. List the states west of the Mississippi River that had less than 10 percent of their land homesteaded.
4. Why do you think the states in question #3 had less land homesteaded than the other states west of the Mississippi River?