

## TEACHING ABOUT IMMIGRATION

using THE LONG WAY TO A NEW LAND and THE LONG WAY WESTWARD

**Grade level:** 1 to 3

### **Materials and Resources:**

- **THE LONG WAY TO A NEW LAND** (ISBN 0-06-025194-8)
- **THE LONG WAY WESTWARD** (ISBN 0-06-025207-3)  
Both books are HarperCollins "I Can Reads" written and illustrated by **JOAN SANDIN**
- Attached maps showing the immigrant route from Sweden to Minnesota, 1868

### **Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- Locate places on a map
- Add up travel times.
- Understand why people emigrated ("push and pull" factors)
- Learn the difference between the words "emigrant" and "immigrant"
- See what the US was like in 1868 (just after the Civil War)
- See how the immigrant family relates to Native Americans and African-Americans
- Understand some of the difficulties of immigration (economy, language, culture)
- Learn a few words in Swedish
- Perform extra activities directly related to what they are learning

**Historical background:** In 1868 and '69, the so-called "hunger years", more than 50,000 Swedes emigrated to America. Newspapers, pamphlets and letters from earlier emigrants spread the *Amerikafeber* (America Fever) throughout Sweden.

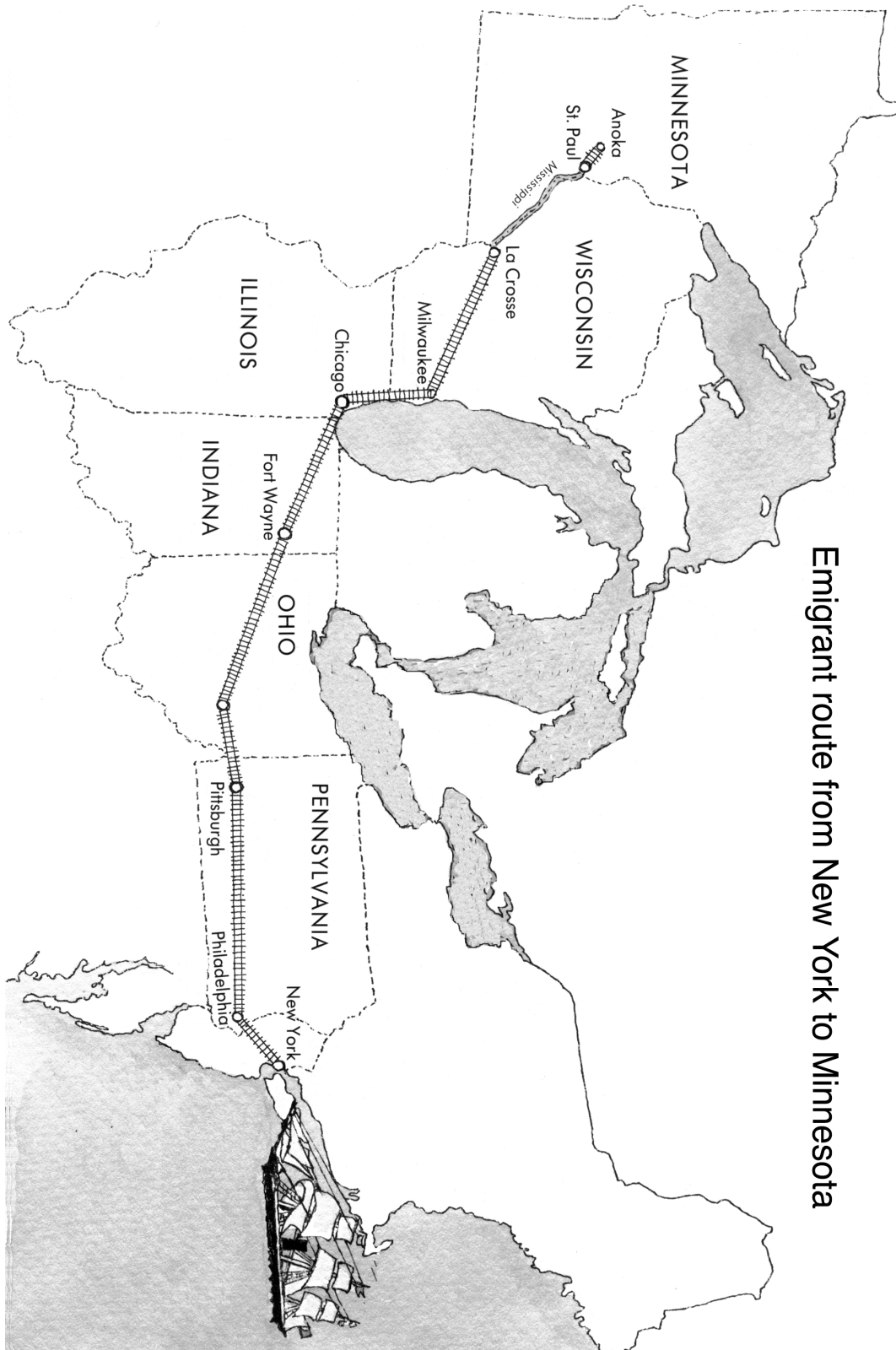
Like thousands of other European emigrants, the Swedes were willing to leave everything behind for the dream of a better life for themselves and their children in the "Land of Opportunity."

In 1868, almost all of the European emigrants traveled to America by steamship. Many emigrants settled in New York, but most of the Swedes continued westward to farm the free lands created by the new Homestead Act of 1862.

Using Joan Sandin's books, THE LONG WAY TO A NEW LAND and THE LONG WAY WESTWARD, your students will meet Carl Erik Larsson and his family, who emigrate from Sweden in 1868. (Both books are historical fiction for emerging readers.) While the Larsson family are not real people, their reasons for leaving Sweden, their long, hard journey to America, their difficult trip across the United States (just after the Civil War), and their fate in Minnesota are typical of the thousands of Swedish immigrant families who landed on our shores in the 1860's.

- **Both the story and illustrations were carefully researched for historical accuracy.**

## **Book 2: THE LONG WAY WESTWARD**



## **Book 2: THE LONG WAY WESTWARD**

### Chapter I The New Land

1. Who are the two boys in the picture on page 7?
2. What is the flag behind them?
3. What does the younger boy say to his brother?

\_\_\_\_\_ says, “ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

4. What does the older brother answer?

\_\_\_\_\_ says, “ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

5. Do you think their family is rich or poor?  
5a. How do you know?

6. Do you know where they are from?

Write the correct word. (Your teacher can help you.)

An \_\_\_\_\_ leaves his or her own country.

An \_\_\_\_\_ lives in a new country.

7. Do you know anyone who is an emigrant or immigrant?

8. What is an emigrant boat?  
8b. How many days were they on the emigrant boat?

Find the emigrant boat on your map.

9. Do they want to stay in New York?

Write down some things they see and hear in New York City.

Things they see	Things they hear

10. What is the name of the river they cross in a ferryboat?  
8a. Where is the boat going?

11. Why does Mamma wonder how far it is to Minnesota?  
Find Minnesota on your map. Color it green.

12. Who meets them in New Jersey?  
12a. What does he tell them?

13. Where do Carl Erik and Jonas go?  
11a. Are they welcome there? Why or why not?

14. Where do they really belong?

Look at the pictures on page 17 and pages 20 – 21.  
Write down some differences between the two pictures.

first class (page 17)	emigrant class (pages 20-21)

13. Where do they change trains?  
Draw a line from New York to that city on your map.
14. Why does Pappa look lost and helpless?  
14a. How do you think that would make Carl Erik feel?
15. Who helps the family find their train?

## Chapter II Rolling Westward

1. What state are they in now?  
Find that state on your map.
2. What does Pappa want the boys to look at?  
2a. Does Jonas think everything is bigger or smaller in America?
3. What does the word homestead mean?
4. What does Pappa say about their homestead in Minnesota?
5. Was it easy for them to leave Sweden?  
5b. Why did they do it?

6. What does Mamma see that makes her think of Sweden?

7. What do the boys do when the train moves slowly?

7a. What does Mamma say about that?

Write some things they do when the train stops.

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8. Why don't they eat dinner in the station?

8a. What do they do instead?

Look at the picture on page 36. Write down what people are doing.

The women are

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The men are

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The older children are

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The younger children are

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9. Who do you think has the most work to do? Why?

10. Why can't the emigrants take the express train to Chicago?  
10a. What do they do instead?

Look at the picture on pages 42 - 43

Write down some things the emigrants see from the train

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11. What do the men talk about on the train?  
11a. Why does Carl Erik think about the red plush seats?

### Chapter III Chicago

Find Crestline, Fort Wayne, and Chicago on your map. Draw a line connecting them.

1. What does Mamma say about Chicago?
2. What does the word "runner" mean?  
2a. Why is Carl Erik not afraid of the runners?
3. What does the runner say to Mamma?
4. Who helps the family?  
4a. How does he help them?

Find La Crosse on your map.  
What river is it near? Color the river blue.

## Chapter IV Up the Mississippi

1. How do the family travel on the river?
2. Who is watching them from the river bank?
  - 2a. Are those people emigrants too?

Find St. Paul on your map.

3. What state is St. Paul in?
4. What does Carl Erik ask the man selling cranberries?
  - 4a. Does the man answer him in English?

Find Anoka on your map.

5. Who meets them at the Anoka station?
  - 5a. Are they happy to see each other?

Write the last four lines in the story.

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6. Do you think this is a good ending?

What do you think will happen next to Carl Erik and his family?  
(Hint: Think language problems, Indians, Carl Erik home alone...)  
To see if you guessed right, you can read about them in the third book,  
AT HOME IN A NEW LAND.



## KEY

### Book 1: THE LONG WAY WESTWARD

#### Chapter I The New Land

1. Carl Erik and Jonas
2. The American flag
3. Jonas says, "Look, Carl Erik, the streets of America are not paved with gold."
4. Carl Erik answers, "That is just something people say. It means America is a rich land."
5. The family is not rich.
  - 5a. They are not well-dressed. They are traveling on the back of a cart.
6. They are from Sweden.

**Sweden** – the name of the country

**Swedish** – the language spoken in Sweden

**Swedes** – the people who live in Sweden

**Ask your students to think of a sentence using all three words.**

The words emigrant and immigrant:  
An **emigrant** leaves his or her own country.  
An **immigrant** lives in a new country.

7. Most Americans are descendants of immigrants. Some students may themselves be immigrants.
8. They were ships that carried (among other things) new immigrants.
  - 8a. They had just spent 12 days on an emigrant boat.
9. No. They think it is too big, crowded and noisy for them.

Some things they see in New York:

They see the high buildings, a train on a track overhead, a newsboy and a shoeshine boy, overflowing garbage cans, pigs, poor people, rich people, a man selling ice cream. They hear whistles blowing, people shouting, and a train rumbling overhead.

10. The Hudson River. The ferryboat is going to New Jersey, just across the river.
11. Minnesota is their final destination. Mamma is weary of traveling.
12. A bilingual railroad agent meets them.
  - 12a. He tell them that their luggage is checked through, but they must change trains in Philadelphia. He also tells them they are on their own, that they should keep an eye on their children, keep calm, and stay together.
13. Carl Erik and Jonas run ahead and get on the train.
  - 13a. No. It is a first class car. The conductor yells at them.
14. They belong in the emigrant car.

### Possible T Chart answers

First class car (page 17)	emigrant class car (pages 20-21)
Red plush seats	wooden benches
Lots of windows and lights	dark, broken window shades
Well-dressed passengers	crowded, shabbily-dressed passengers

13. They change trains in Philadelphia.
14. He doesn't understand the language. He doesn't know which train to take.
  - 14a. Insecure, confused, disappointed, suprised

**Have your students think about how it would make Carl Erik feel to see his father unable to deal with the situation.**

15. An African-American porter

## Chapter II Rolling Westward

1. They are in Pennsylvania.
2. Pappa wants the boys to see the prosperous farms.
  - 2a. Jonas thinks everything is bigger in America.
3. Here it means the 160 acres of free government land, provided by the Homestead Act 1862.
4. Pappa says if they work hard their homestead in Minnesota will be as fine as the farm they are looking at.
5. No.
  - 5a. They left Sweden to have a chance for a better life in America. This, of course, is the classic reason for emigration.
6. Mamma sees birch trees, which she recognizes from Sweden.
7. The boys get out and run alongside, racing the train.
  - 7a. Mamma says, "Get back in here! How would we ever find you if you got left behind?"  
Some things they do when the train stops are stretch their legs, fill the water bucket, pick wild berries, and hunt for treasures.
8. Dinner cost 25¢ - too much for their family of five.
  - 8a. They buy food from a vendor and cook their own meal in the car.  
The women are cooking the food.  
The men are eating and talking.  
The older children are helping with the babies.  
The younger children are hanging on their Mother's skirts
9. Probably the women, who "take their work with them", have the most work. They do the cooking, childcare, and laundry. The men are used to doing farm work, so there is not much for them to do on the journey westward.

10. They can't afford to travel by the more expensive express train.
  - 10a. They sleep in the station and wait for the next train with an emigrant car.

Some things the emigrants see from the train are prosperous farms, machines, factories, a school, a church, a village.

11. The men talk about the weather, the crops and the new American farm machines.
  - 11a. When a young man says, "In America everyone is equal." Carl Erik remembers the first class car with the plush red seats.

### **Chapter III Chicago**

1. Mamma says that Chicago is full of pickpockets and runners.
2. A runner is a person who tries to rob and fool newcomers.
  - 2a. Carl Erik knows that Pappa has their money hidden in his coat lining.
3. He says, "Come with me. There are no more trains today."
4. Big Carlson helps the family.
  - 4a. He scares away the runner, helps them find their train, and gives them a Swedish language newspaper and some sweets for the boys.

La Cross is near the Mississippi River.

### **Chapter IV Up the Mississippi**

1. They travel on the open deck of a steamboat.
2. Some Indians are watching them.
  - 2a. Native Americans are not usually thought of as immigrants.
3. Minnesota.
4. He asks him (in English) where the station is.
  - 4a. The man answers him in Swedish.
5. Carl Erik's uncle Axel and his cousin Anna Stina.
  - 5a. Yes.

The long journey was over.

They were finally home.

Home in their new land –

America!

6. Students may have alternative endings to the story...

Encourage your students to predict what might happen to the family in Minnesota. Then, have them read the third book, AT HOME IN A NEW LAND, and see how close they came!

***Always happy to get your feedback. Write to me at: [joansandin@cox.net](mailto:joansandin@cox.net)***