
Primary Source Comprehension: Colonial Travel

Primary SOLs: 3.2 c. 3.3 b. 3.5. 4.4 d. 4.1 a-c. 5.4. 5.5.

Document Context: Built in 1747, Rippon Lodge was the private home of the Blackburn Family until 1811. Richard Blackburn was originally from England. He came to the American colonies to start a new life. He owned vast amounts of land for agriculture, and built his home on the bluff off Neabsco Creek. From here he could send items out to market or other people by boat or by land, using the King's Highway (a road which close to by Rippon Lodge). Richard Blackburn grew wheat, corn, and tobacco. He owned cows, horse, and a sawmill. His son, Thomas, became the owner of the home in 1757. In addition to running the plantation, Thomas was involved in politics. During the Revolutionary War, Thomas volunteered for the militia, and was injured at the battle of Germantown, which ended his military career.

Document Text: Roads in Colonial Virginia were not as good as they are today. Many were made of just were dirt which made traveling difficult when it rained and snowed. When the weather was nice, traveling from Rippon Lodge to Dumfries (about 6 miles) by foot would take a person 2 hours. By riding a horse, it would an hour and a half. If you had goods to take with you, a wagon pulled by an ox would be used. Traveling to Dumfries would take 3 or more hours this way. A carriage pulled by horses could make the trip in a little more than an hour. Another way to travel was by water-creeks, rivers and oceans. Often the colonists could travel by ship or barge more quickly and go farther distances, even across an ocean

Exercise:

1. John, and his father Richard, must head to Dumfries to sell some goods. They will travel by horse. They will then travel to Fredericksburg, which is an additional 24.3 miles away. If 6 miles to Dumfries by horse takes one and half hours, how long will it take for John and Richard to get to their final destination?
2. By land it would take John and his brother Thomas 116 miles to travel to Williamsburg from Dumfries. How many hours of travel would that be?
3. By river, it would take John and Thomas 118.65 nautical miles to travel from Dumfries to Jamestown and then another 7.58 miles from Jamestown to Williamsburg by land. How many hours is that is a boat travels 5.75 miles per hour?
4. BONUS: Consider the modes of travel for them-what would be better? Why? What obstacles would they possibly encounter going either by river or by land? How long would you estimate those difficulties might delay such a trip back then?

— Parks, Recreation & Tourism

