**Unit One**

### 1880s Agricultural Nation: Foods and Families on the Move
(subtheme: immigrant and migrant workers)

![Image of agricultural workers]

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<td>What about Your Neighborhood?</td>
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To the Teacher

Major Theme
How trains effected change on the growth of cities and farms

Subtheme
Immigrant and migrant workers

Preparation
Make 4 copies of the image cards (cut apart), and the Clues sheet.

Activity One: Image Cards
Grade Level: 5-12

1. What’s the Connection?
Divide the class into 4 groups. Give each group a photocopy of the 6 image cards and questions for visual analysis. Assign an image to each student. Direct students to answer the questions for their image. Then have them hypothesize how each image might be connected to the locomotive. (20 minutes)

2. Using Secondary Sources
Pass out the Clues sheet to each group. Ask students to read the additional information about their images to each other (perhaps in a round-robin format), then adjust their group hypotheses. Each group should share their conclusions with the class. (15 minutes)

Notes:

National History Standards: ERA 6 1870–1900 Development of the Industrial United States
1A availability of new consumer goods; 1B immigration and migrations of workers; 1C relationship of transportation and farming
2A/B ethnic conflict, anti-Chinese movements; 2C new forms of leisure
3A/C the Populist Movement and railroad monopoly building
Image 1-1
Look carefully at this machine. What adjectives would you use to describe it? What is the engineer doing?

Image 1-2
What kind of work are these people doing? What kind of tools are they using? Where are they from? List your evidence.
Image 1-3
What is being advertised? Is the advertisement targeted at business travelers or vacationers? List your evidence. What do you think the words “broad gauge” in the ad mean?

Image 1-4
Divide the image into four sections in your mind’s eye. What different elements make up this label? What is the purpose of this label? Describe how its aim is achieved.
Image 1-5
What do you think these people were doing before they posed for the photograph? Look at their clothes and tools for clues. Where are they? What is the environment all around them?

Image 1-6
Where was this photograph taken, in the city or country? What season is indicated by the clothing? How might the fruits and vegetables get to this market?
After the first transcontinental railroad was built in 1869, two decades of railroad building filled in the national network and connected American communities. America’s railroads were built by thousands of migrant and immigrant workers. In the West, the labor force was predominantly Chinese, while in the East, many Irish men were employed to lay the tracks, clear the right-of-way, and blast through natural obstacles. Food and manufactured goods could now be transported more easily across the nation. New cities flourished beyond the waterways that previously served as the transportation network. These new urban centers became dependent on faraway farms and trains to transport food.

Farms, both large and small, began to grow crops based on which would be most profitable. Large farms depended on immigrant and migrant workers to harvest their crops. Railroads charged lower fees to the larger farms. Independent smaller-sized farmers, many of them in the South and West, became angry and created a political group that attempted to break railroad monopolies, regulate railroad rates, and help smaller farmers. This force grew into the Populist movement.

The town of Watsonville was served by the largest railroad in California, the Southern Pacific, and shipped out food grown in the fertile Pajaro Valley. The people of nearby Santa Cruz struggled to obtain a railroad connection to their town. After years of politicking, a 15-mile “short line” from Watsonville to Santa Cruz was completed in 1876, helping to make the seaside town a more popular tourist destination.

1-1 Locomotive “Jupiter,” 1880s (Smithsonian Institution #74-8184)
This steam locomotive was used in Santa Cruz, California. Built in Philadelphia in 1876, it ran on narrow-gauge tracks (3 feet apart). Santa Cruz community leaders built their own railroad to connect their town to the rest of the national rail network, and built it narrow-gauge to save money. Just 7 years later, the Southern Pacific Railroad bought this line and switched the tracks to broad-gauge (4 feet, 8½ inches apart). The Jupiter was sold to Guatemala, where it hauled bananas for 60 years. In 1976, the Smithsonian Institution collected and then restored the Jupiter.

1-2 Chinese railroad workers, 1880s (Courtesy of Pajaro Valley Historical Association)
Seeking cheap labor, the town of Santa Cruz hired Chinese workers to build the railroad. They constructed bridges, laid wooden ties, and spiked the iron rails into place, all for $6 a week. As this work ended, the Chinese looked for other employment opportunities, and a number of them went to work in the state’s rapidly changing fields and orchards. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. This law barred new Chinese from emigrating to the United States.
1-3 Railroad advertisement, 1880s (Courtesy of Palo Alto Historical Association)
This Southern Pacific advertisement highlights the “broad-gauge” train, meaning the standard-width track used by most railroads. The Southern Pacific switched the tracks to broad-gauge so customers would not have to change trains in Watsonville. The company promoted Santa Cruz as a vacation resort. The Southern Pacific bought other railroad lines and soon monopolized much of California.

1-4 Fruit-crate label, 1900s (NMAH Transportation Collections)
Packing labels helped railroads keep track of which box belonged to which company, a necessity when refrigerated or ventilated railroad cars delivered crops to national markets. These cars contained ice, cut from the Sierra Mountains and loaded onto trains for transportation to icehouses near the California farming regions.

1-5 Izumizaki family in strawberry field, 1890s (Courtesy of Watsonville Public Library Collection)
After the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese workers were in increasingly short supply. Without large numbers of new immigrants, growers began to look for other sources of labor. In the 1890s, Japanese men began working in and around Watsonville. Japanese migrants began to form families, since U.S. law did not exclude Japanese women from immigrating into the country, as it had with Chinese women. But by 1924, the Japanese, like the Chinese before them, were no longer allowed to immigrate. Again, growers looked elsewhere, to immigrant laborers from nearby Mexico and from the U.S. colony in the Philippines.

1-6 Street vendors on Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C., about 1900 (Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)
As urban centers grew, they depended on daily deliveries of food. Washington, D.C.’s Center Market was the largest public market in the city, and was close to the train station. Residents who shopped there could buy local and regional produce as well as foods shipped from around the nation and the world. Trolley riders came in from the new suburbs to shop in the city markets.