

In Search of a Settlement

Comparing our community's development to those of ancient civilizations



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Aurora University
OEDC 5197: History of Rockford
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Course/Grade Level: 6th grade history-ancient civilizations

Lesson Title: "In Search of a Settlement"

Teacher: Lisa Hathaway

1. **Set Induction:** Whole class brainstorming session based on the question:
"What do people need, in terms of a settlement, to survive?"
Using chart paper or board, the teacher will list student ideas which should reflect the need for water/food sources, areas that will provide defense, shelter, aid in transportation, and trade. Discuss with students why these things would be vital to a settlement's success.
2. **Objectives/Standards:**
 - Students will be able to describe the importance of river valleys in establishing a civilization.
 - Students will compare/contrast the origin of their own community, Rockford, to those of ancient times.
 - Students will create an early settlement of their own considering food/water sources, defense, trade, shelter and transportation.

SS6-08: Explain how geographical factors and location influenced the development of ancient and current civilizations.

Procedures:

Day 1

- A) After completing the set induction (above), students will participate in a group activity called, "**Finding a New Homeland**".
- B) Divide the class into 5 groups. Assign a 'map territory to each group and ask them to think/discuss the pros & cons of living in each of the areas.
(Reproducible for groups and teacher's guide attached)

SITE A- Delta
SITE C- Edge of forest

SITE B-Foothills of mountains
SITE D- Beyond the falls
SITE E- Salt mine

- C) Ask one student from each group to report on the pros/cons of each site as part of an oral discussion. When share time is complete ask the class, **“What seemed to be the top priority in choosing a good place to live?”** (fresh water; neither animals, plants, or humans can survive without it.)

Day 2

- A) In yesterday’s lesson, fresh water was established as being a vital necessity for settlement and civilizations. With that thought laying the foundation, discuss the students’ hometown of Rockford, IL.

“What natural resources does Rockford have that would have caused people to settle here?”

“Who might have been here before settlers? Why would they have selected this area?”

“What do we know about how Rockford was settled?”

- B) Students will participate in a jigsaw activity which will help them piece together the origin of their city and underline the importance of a river valley in new settlements-recent or ancient.
- C) **GROUP ACTIVITY:** Divide the students into as many groups as you have documents. (*attached*) The documents consist of pictures and writings which tell the story of Rockford’s origin. Each group will evaluate the document and read the brief summary. Each group will complete a document organizer. (*attached*)
- D) **GROUP SHARE:** One member from each group will report to the class on the document they evaluated. The teacher may elaborate on the document or drop questions into the discussion to help students understand how their document played a role in the settlement stages of our large city.

Resources and Scholarship:

1. Lundin, Jon W., Rockford, An Illustrated History, 1989, pgs. 8-29.
2. Roden, Phil and Chip Brady, The DBQ Project, 2011, pgs. 78-79.
3. Swanson, Don, Images of America: Rockford & CD Rom, 2012, pgs. 7-
4. www.iowadot.gov/autotrails/blackhawktrail.html
5. www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~lbtlog/winnebagor/blake.htm

Conclusion:

On an exit slip, (post-it, pre-cut slip, or note paper) each student will respond in summary format to the statement/question:

“Describe the importance of a river valley in establishing a settlement or civilization. How did those who lived/settled in the Rock River Valley utilize these same important factors?”

The students should have approximately 5-7 minutes to respond. They will give their slip to the teacher as they exit the classroom.

Follow Up Activities:

- A) Students will use a form to design their own river valley settlement using a template for guidance. (*attached*)
- B) The first ancient river valley civilization unit will begin...Mesopotamia. The Sumerians settled along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This theme will be revisited throughout the school year as each ancient civilization is studied.

Worksheets and Templates

(complete set in hard copy of lesson)

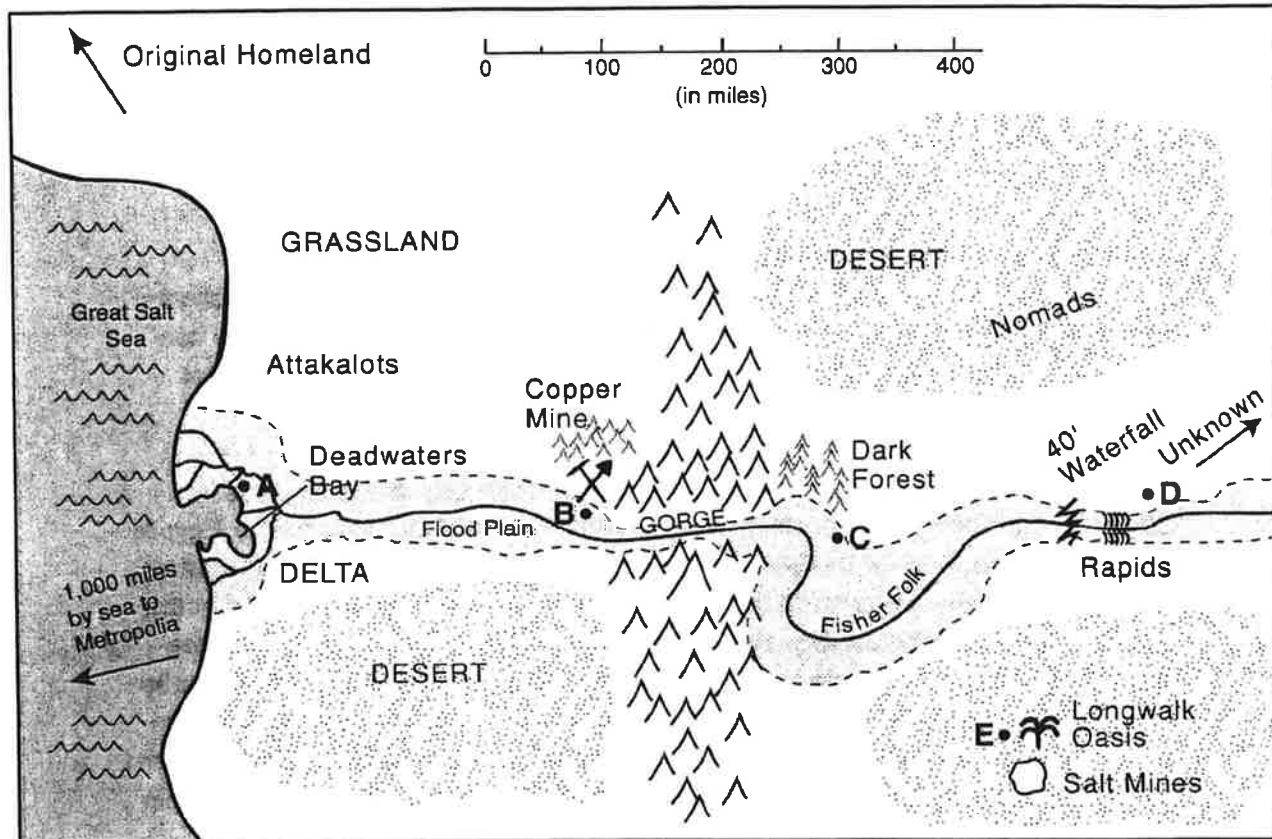


Hook Exercise: Finding a New Homeland

Directions: It is several centuries before the time of Jesus of Nazareth. You are an elder in a goat-herding tribe of 500 people. Unfriendly raiders from the north are forcing you off your land. You send out a small party of men, armed mostly with your prayers, to search for a new homeland. Six months later, they return. That evening, around a large bonfire, the scouting party presents a rough map to the Council of Elders with five possible settlement sites.

Examine the map with a fellow elder and discuss the pros and cons of each option.

CV



<p>Site A</p> <p>Pros:</p> <p>Cons:</p>	<p>Site B</p> <p>Pros:</p> <p>Cons:</p>	<p>Site C</p> <p>Pros:</p> <p>Cons:</p>
<p>Site D</p> <p>Pros:</p> <p>Cons:</p>	<p>Site E</p> <p>Pros:</p> <p>Cons:</p>	<p>Which site will you recommend to the council? Why?</p>

The Hook

Teacher Note: The purpose of the Hook Exercise is to create some initial interest in how geography helps people decide where to live. Read the scenario and directions aloud to the class. Briefly go over the map. Ask students to identify the locations of sites A, B, C, D and E, and also note other landmarks. Divide students into pairs or groups of three and give them several minutes to discuss the situation and what they would do. Allow a few minutes at the end for students to share their responses with everyone.

Questions to drop into the discussion:

- Which direction is the Great River flowing? (Water flows downhill, in this case, west.)
- What are the basic needs for survival in this kind of environment? (food, water, clothing, shelter)
- What would you need to meet those needs? (water source, farm land, timber)
- What would you need to succeed in keeping your goats alive? (source of water for irrigation; grazing land, food and shelter for animals)
- Which sites have security concerns? Distance concerns? Trade concerns?
- When the discussion is ending, ask what seems to be the top priority in choosing a good place to live (fresh water; neither animals nor plants can survive without it).

Site A: Delta

Pros: On the river: water, fishing, transport
Good farm and grazing land
Near sea for possible trade
Closest to old homeland

Cons: Easy target for Attakalots
Far from timber and copper mine

Site B: Foothills of mountains

Pros: On the river
Wood for fire, building
Copper for tool making and pots
Not too far from old homeland
Nearby grazing on flood plain

Cons: Still pretty close to Attakalots

Site C: Edge of forest

Pros: Near the river; grassy area for grazing, farming
Near forest (timber)
Fisher folk sound friendly
400 miles from Attakalots

Cons: With gorge and mountains, hard to get to

Site D: Beyond the falls

Pros: Near river
Safe from Attakalots
A flood plain for grazing

Cons: Very difficult to get to; very isolated;
difficult transportation downriver

Site E: Salt mine

Pros: Near oasis
Salt can be used for trade

Cons: No river; limited grazing
Hard to get to

Group members: _____

What is this document?

What kind of document is this?

What can you 'observe' about this document?

Why do you think this document is important?

List one interesting fact you learned from this document.



WINNEBAGO/SAUK CHIEF, BLACK HAWK

The Sauk and Fox Indians were the first to live in Midwestern Illinois and South western Wisconsin along the river valleys . In 1830, seeking to make way for settlers moving into Illinois, the United States government ordered the Sauk to move and accept new lands in present-day Iowa and surrender all land east of the Mississippi River to the U.S. government. Living in the Iowa territory, the Sauk struggled to prepare enough acreage for their crops. In April 1832, Black Hawk disobeyed the conditions and led about 1,000 Sauk and Fox people back to northern Illinois. A militia was raised and attacked a small band of warriors. He and his Indian army were chased north along the Rock River into Wisconsin. In August of 1832 Black Hawk and his starving band surrendered to the settler militias. With Black Hawk's defeat, the Rock River Valley became a prime site for new settlements.



GERMANICUS KENT

Kent was born in Suffield, Connecticut, on May 31, 1790. He acquired a business education and had several successful businesses in Virginia and Alabama where it is said that he also owned slaves. In the early 1830's, Kent sold his businesses and moved to Galena, Illinois, to be near his brother. While there, he met another entrepreneur, Thatcher Blake, and together with Kent's slave, **Lewis Lemon**, decided to explore the Rock River valley in beginning a settlement. On August 24, 1834, the roots of what would become Rockford, Illinois, were put down. Germanicus Kent started a saw mill and got a license to establish Rockford's first ferry in 1836. Two years later Kent was elected to the Illinois State House of Representatives, the first representative from Rockford. During the late 1830's, a financial panic ruined Kent's finances and in 1844 he relocated to Blacksburg, Virginia. It was here that he died in March 1862 at age 72.

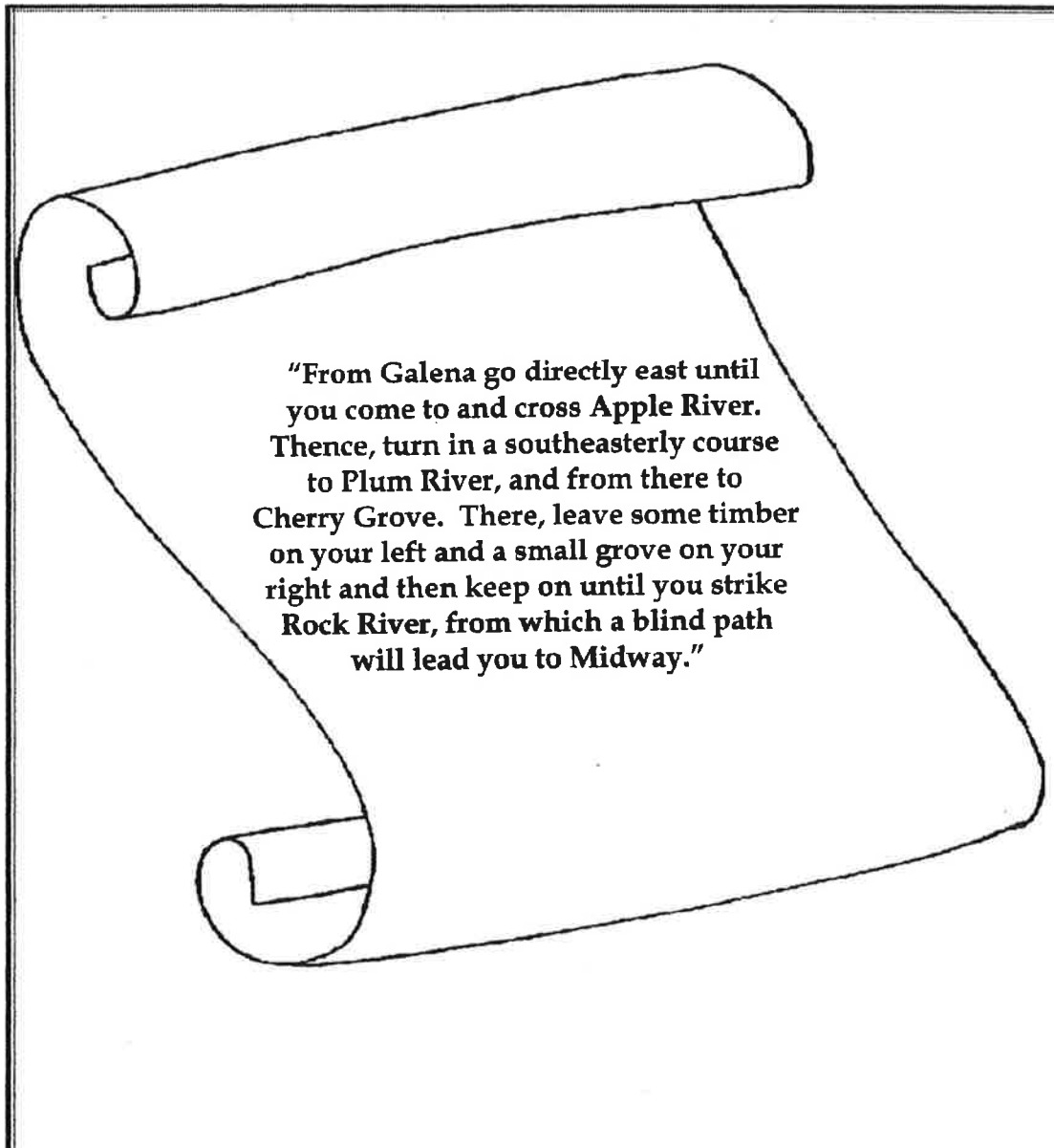


THATCHER BLAKE

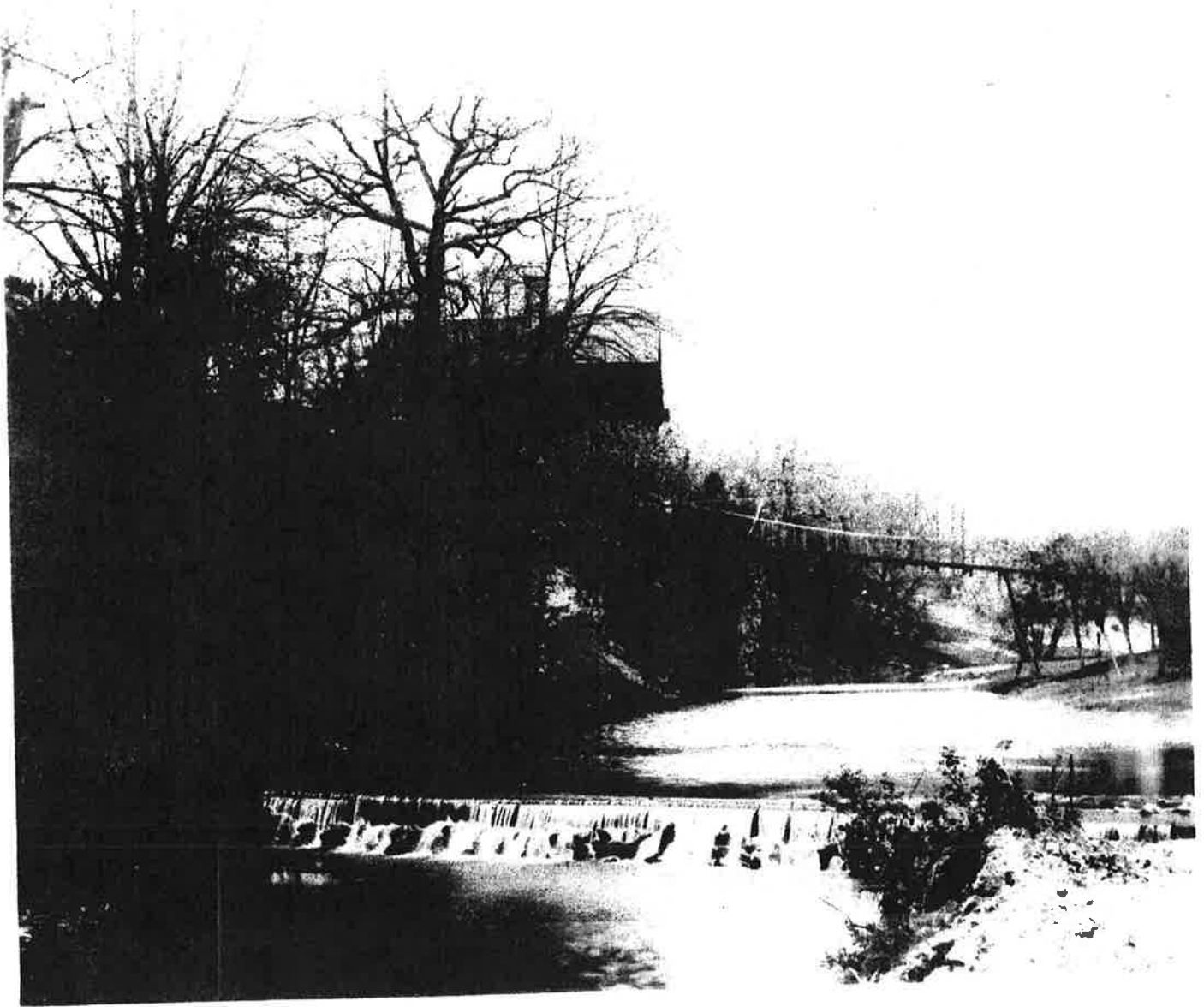
Blake was born in Oxford County, Maine, in 1809. He was drawn to the Midwest with the idea of striking it rich. In 1834, Thatcher Blake met Germanicus Kent in Galena, Illinois, and together they set out on an exploratory trip across prairie grass and thick forests. They located a good sawmill seat on the west bank of Kent Creek at the mouth of the Rock River and took 'squatters possession' of the site. They named it Midway because it was 'midway' between Galena and Chicago. Blake lived the rest of his life in what will become Rockford. He died at the age of 71 in 1879, having been a farmer most of his life and then a real estate dealer, moving into the city.

Letter from Germanicus Kent, Rockford, Illinois founder, to an acquaintance in the fall of 1834.

Source: Rockford, an Illustrated History by Jon W. Lundin, 1989



Germanicus Kent called the new settlement, Midway, because it was more or less 'midway' between Galena and Chicago. The first visitors experienced trouble in finding it because there were no roads, and the few trails that existed, generally followed meandering waterways. The first roadways to Midway began as solitary paths, one rider following the tracks of another, wearing the trail down. On the open prairie, signposts were left behind by travelers-rock piles and 'mile stakes'.



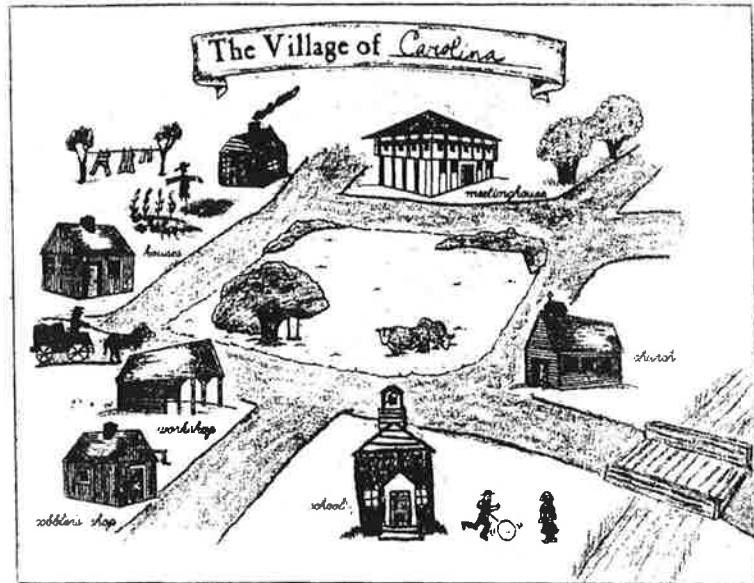
ROCKFORD'S FIRST INDUSTRY

Almost immediately after Germanicus Kent and Thatcher Blake selected a site for a permanent camp, Kent made plans to build a saw mill. Construction on the dam, to furnish water power for the mill on Kent Creek, began in late summer of 1834. Kent returned the following summer with his family to find the dam washed away by spring floods. He rebuilt the dam and finished the saw mill. He also built a log cabin for his family. It was completed in 1835, and in 3 years was running to capacity. Kent Creek runs by the old train depot on South Main.

Design a River Valley Village

DIRECTIONS:

1. Read the information below about a river valley village.
2. Plan your settlement on a 9"X12" piece of construction paper.
3. Cut out the buildings if you choose, and add other buildings or items mentioned in the information.
4. Give your village a name.



Civilization began with small settlements along rich river valleys. As people began to colonize throughout the world, they looked for a freshwater source for water and fish. They knew the fertile soil around the river bed would provide good crops and a route to trade via the waterways with other communities. Early humans used the idea of irrigation to move water further distances. Later in history, people would use the rush of the river current to power some of our first industries. Early settlers would have also been inclined to settle near wooded areas which would provide timber for building shelter and a defense against the elements. Forests would have also provided a wealth of food sources. Wide, open tracts of land or prairie would be needed for crops. As time passed, these river valley villages would grow to include places of worship, (temples/churches), shops where artisans could sell their wares, and a meeting place to conduct the business of keeping order in these communities.

A River Valley Village

The Village of _____

