

SECTION-TOPIC	PIONEER LIFE – BAREFOOT MAILMAN
SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD	Standard 3: <i>Analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in response to the industrial Revolution.</i> SS.912.A.3.13: <i>Examine key events and people in Florida history as they relate to United States history.</i>
VOCABULARY	Environmental Determinism, Inlets
REQUIRED MATERIALS	Picture Comparison Worksheet, Reaching Out: Mail Routes Reading
DURATION	1 – 50 minute period

DO NOW OR PRE-READING –

- Teacher will make copies of the **Picture Comparison Worksheet (see attached)**
- Students will take about 5-10 minutes to complete the worksheet.

LESSON –

- Teacher will make available the following reading, *Reaching Out: Mail Routes*
- Students will read the article about the Barefoot Mailmen.

Reaching Out: Mail Routes

A beach-walker was later added to carry the mail on foot from Jupiter to Miami, with boats kept to cross the inlets at Lake Worth, Hillsboro, and New River (Ft. Lauderdale).

Mail carriers walked barefoot along the beach in order to avoid slogging through the inland swamps. The six-day round trip covered 136 miles—80 on foot plus 56 in small boats. Over the course of a year, the “Barefoot Mailmen” walked about 7,000 miles. Mail arrived in Jupiter via boats on the Indian River and was carried overland 7.5 miles to Juno by a mule-driven wagon, or hack line, then transferred to a sailboat or steamer that made stops at the post offices along Lake Worth.¹ Until 1887, mail destined for Miami was left at the Palm Beach Post Office for the mailman to pick up.

One of the barefoot mailmen, James Edward “Ed” Hamilton, died in the course of duty. In October 1887, someone borrowed the skiff he used to cross the Hillsboro Inlet and left it on the other side. Hamilton either drowned or was attacked by alligators or sharks when he tried to swim across the inlet; his body was never found.

After Hamilton’s death, the route that had ended in Jupiter was extended to include Palm Beach. Hypoluxo became the northern terminus of the Miami Route, shortening the previous route by ten miles.² The new contract was won by Andrew

¹ “The Barefoot Mail Route,” Lake Worth Pioneers Association at www.lwpa.org.

² Tim Robinson, *A Tropical Frontier*, 11, 212.

Garnett, who had come to Lake Worth from Kentucky with Hamilton and had recently resigned as Hypoluxo's postmaster. Garnett, with Charlie Pierce as assistant, kept the new route for two years. The last trip on the Barefoot Route was in January 1893, when a "stage" carried the mail. The beach route was used from December 18, 1884 to January 22, 1893.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION -



Students will be required to answer the following questions concerning the reading,
Reaching out: Mail Routes

1. How much area were the Barefoot Mailmen expected to cover?
2. How did the mail arrive on the beach for the mailmen to carry?
3. What were some of the hazards the Barefoot Mailmen faced along their route?
4. After 10 years of delivering mail the Barefoot Mailman Route was closed, what were some advancements in society that would have made the delivery of mail on foot obsolete?

PICTURE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

DIRECTIONS – Compare the 2 pictures below and fill in the chart

Environmental Determinism – The natural environment has a controlling influence over various aspects of human life, including cultural development.

		
Picture	Barefoot Mailman	Pony Express
What action is taking place in the picture of the statue?		
What is a similarity in the 2 pictures?		
What is a difference in the 2 pictures?		
What is the surrounding landscape?		

Question – How were the jobs of the Barefoot Mailman and the Pony Express influenced and affected by the environment and environmental determinism?