



Learning on the Great Lakes Seaway Trail *One of America's Byways*

Lesson Plan #3 – Ships during the War of 1812

Subject: Social Studies

Grade: 4-6

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Anticipatory Set:

Review with the students the battles during the War of 1812.

New York State Standards:

Standard 1.1, 1.2 - History of the United States and New York

Standard 2.1, 2.2 – World History

Standard 4.1, 4.2 4.3 – Economics

Standard 5 – Civics, Citizenship, and Government

Objectives:

Students will learn about the life on a ship during the War of 1812 by reading the story of Ned Myers A Survivor's Account of the Sinking of the Scourge taken from James Fenimore Cooper's "A Life Before the Mast" found on the internet site <http://www.hamilton-scourge.city.hamilton.on.ca/sinking.htm>. The students will create a writing piece where they write a journal or diary about their life on a ship.

Purpose:

To have students understand what sailors endured during the time of the War of 1812.

Summary:

The Seaway Trail and the War of 1812

During the War of 1812 there were a number of events that occurred along the Seaway Trail in New York. The action during the War of 1812 took place on four major fronts: Lake Erie and the Niagara Frontier, Lake Ontario, the eastern shore of Lake Ontario, and along the St. Lawrence River.

Region 1: Lake Erie and the Niagara Frontier

Oliver Hazard Perry commanded the U.S. Naval forces on Lake Erie and was successful in routing British ships from it. Land sites, particularly the Black Rock Navy Yard, were active with shipbuilding throughout the war.

Region 2: Lake Ontario

The British Royal Navy launched many coastal raids along the shoreline to disrupt the U.S. war effort. Commodore Isaac Chauncey caused a powerful fleet to be built at Sackets Harbor for the purpose of controlling Lake Ontario. The end result was a tit-for-tat shipbuilding marathon with Great Britain. By the war's end, some of the largest ships in the U.S. and British Navies were prowling Lake Ontario.

Region 3: Eastern Shore of Lake Ontario

From Oswego to Cape Vincent, the eastern shore of Lake Ontario was an area where numerous battles were played out between the United States versus the British and Canadians. Indians of various tribes fought on both sides.



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Region 4: St. Lawrence River

The waterway and the shoreline of the St. Lawrence River saw a great deal of wartime travel. They traveled by boat, across ice either by foot or by horseback. The military strategy was who ever controlled the St. Lawrence River also controlled the outcome of the war.

Shipbuilding:

In the beginning of the war the Americans had 16 warships compared to the British who had 600 vessels. Sackets Harbor, Lake Ontario and Black Rock, Lake Erie became important ports for shipbuilding. The Americans were active building ships from nearby forests. At Black Rock shipbuilders constructed two 20 gun brigs and three gunboats on Lake Erie. March 31, 1803 the **Oneida** was built and launched from Oswego. In 1809 the **Diana** was built and launched in Oswego. At Sackets Harbor shipbuilders constructed a number of batteaux, gunboats, brigs, corvettes and frigates. At Sackets they also built first-rate ships-of-the-line. The Madison was launched in November 1812 from Sackets Harbor. Sackets Harbor built two more ships from 1812-1813: the **Lady of the Lake**, a small schooner, and the largest ship on Lake Ontario at the time, the **General Pike**. A number of merchant schooners were purchased and armed by the American Navy. The **Lord Nelson (Scourge)** and **Diana (Hamilton)** were two such ships.

Schooner: The schooner is not a specific kind of vessel, but a large family of ship types. What schooners had in common were a fore-and-aft rig sail and at least two masts. Two-masted fore-and-aft schooners were small, fast and handy vessels that were often used for fishing in the 19th century. The three-masted fore-and-aft schooners were very common for trading in the Baltic. A topsail schooner is similar to a fore-and-aft schooner, but carries square topsails, and sometimes a topgallant sail in its foremast.

Brig: A brig is a two-masted vessel with both masts square rigged. On the aft mast, the main mast, there is also a gaff sail. The brig possessed some unique sailing qualities, and a skilled master could maneuver her with great ease and elegance; a brig could turn around almost on the spot.

Ship-of-the-line: The ship-of-the-line was a sailing warship that was the principal vessel of the West's great navies from the mid-17th to the mid-19th century. It evolved from a tactic in naval warfare known as the line of battle, in which two opposing columns of ships maneuvered to fire their guns broadside against each other. Since the largest ships carrying the biggest guns usually won these battles, this led to the construction of more big line-of-battle ships, or ships -of-the-line. These three masted ships were often 200ft (60m) long, displaced 1,200-2,000 tons and had crew of 600-800 men. They usually had 60-110 cannons and other guns along three decks.

Frigate: A frigate was a three masted, fully rigged vessel that often carried 30-40 guns in all. The ship was small and faster than the ship-of-the-line and served as a scout or as an escort protecting merchant convoys. The frigate war vessel was intermediate between a corvette and a ship-of-the-line.



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Corvette: A corvette is a small, fast naval vessel ranking in size below a frigate. They were a three masted ship with square rigging and carried about 20 guns on the top deck. They frequently served as dispatchers among the ships of a battle fleet.

Gunboat: A gunboat is a small ship fitted with guns. The boat was fast that had large guns mounted on it.

Transport: A transport was a ship carrying mainly people or freight.

Naval Operations on the High Seas:

1812:

August 13 – U.S.S. **Constitution** “old ironsides” vs. H.M.S. **Guenivere** (U.S. victory)

October 17 - U.S.S. **Wasp** vs. H.M.S. **Frolic** and H.M.S. **Poictiers**

U.S. S. **Wasp** defeated H.M.S. **Frolic** but was itself captured by the H.M.S. **Poictiers**.

October 25 - U.S.S. **United States** vs. H.M.S. **Macedonian** (U.S. victory)

December 29 - U.S.S. **Constitution** vs. H.M.S. **Java** (U.S. victory)

1813:

February 24 - U.S.S. **Hornet** vs. H.M.S. **Peacock** (U.S. victory)

June 1 - H.M.S. **Shannon** vs. U.S.S. **Chesapeake** (British victory)

August 14 - H.M.S. **Pelican** vs. U.S.S. **Argus** (British victory)

September 3 - U.S.S. **Enterprise** vs. H.M.S. **Boxer** (U.S. victory)

1814:

March 21 - H.M.S. **Phoebe**, H.M.S. **Cherub** vs. U.S.S. **Essex** (British victory)

April 29 - U.S.S. **Peacock** vs. H.M.S. **Epervier** (U.S. victory)

June 28 - U.S.S. **Wasp** vs. H.M.S. **Reindeer** (U.S. victory)

September 1 - U.S.S. **Wasp** vs. H.M.S. **Avon** (U.S. victory)

1815:

January 15 –H.M.S. **Endymion** vs. U.S.S. **President** (British victory)

February 20 - U.S.S. **Constitution** vs. H.M.S. **Cyane** and H.M.S. **Levant** (U.S. victory)

March 23 - U.S.S. **Hornet** vs. H.M.S. **Penguin** (U.S. victory)

Other ships:

American:

Lawrence, Niagara, Oswego, and Oneida (brigs)

Hamilton, Scourge, and Julia (schooners)

Superior (frigate)

New Orleans and Chippewa

British:

Caledonia

Detroit

Lady Provost (schooner)

Wolfe (flag ship)



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H.M.S. St. Lawrence

Canadian Marine Ships:

Earl of Moira

Duke of Gloucester

Prince Regent

Life of a Sailor: <http://www.Hamilton-scourge.city.Hamilton.on.ca/lifeof.htm>

Jobs: There were a lot of jobs on a *schooner*, where the ship had a Captain or a Sailing Master who sometimes owned the vessel. The mate was the second-in-command. He usually was in command of the crew of 3 to 4 seamen and a cabin boy. Any of these men could assume the role of a pilot. The ship had a full time cook, but the cabin boy often had the job of cooking. The cabin boy name was just a title the person could be a grown man or woman.

Duties: The crew's duties were a very physical job. They had to raise masts, hoist the anchor, and manned the winches that were used to load the cargo. The crew could not be afraid of heights. Each crewmember had a watch that consist of four hours on and four hours off. When they were not sailing the seamen had to maintain the ship. They fix any rigging needing repair and oil the masts. The ship always took on some water so they had to pump the ship everyday. Once a year the ship was recaulked, tarred and painted.

Military Ships/Gun Loading: If the vessel was in military service. Some seamen were assigned to a gun where they would send the night sleeping next to their gun. The gun crew would have a captain who would command the men where to point and shoot the gun. Each person on the crew would have a specific job in loading and firing the gun. Once the gun was loaded the gun was rolled or slid onto the deck and fired.

Provisions: The Captain was responsible for having all of the provisions to feed and take care of his crew.

Clothing: The crew was expected to purchase their "slops" or working clothes. Some sailors would make their own clothes than buy them. The sailors commonly buy: common hats, pea jackets, cloth jackets, duck jackets, cloth and duck trousers, duck frocks, Guernsey frocks, check shirts, shoes, stockings, blankets, mattresses.

Teach:

1. Take the students to a computer lab or make copies of the story of Ned Myers. Have the students go to this web site:
<http://www.hamilton-courge.city.hamilton.on.ca/sinking.htm>
2. Have the class read the story together.
3. Discuss the different types of ships and the different jobs the sailors had during this time.
4. Discuss how the ships played an important part of the War of 1812.
5. Assign the students a written project where they have to create a journal or a diary about the life on a ship. They need to say what their job is on the ship and what



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encounters they may have experienced on the ship. They can have their ship be a part of a battle during the War of 1812. They can be on either the American or the British side of the war. They could be on a merchant ship and witness a battle. Let the students be creative.

6. Have the students share their stories with the class.

Guided Practice:

Guide the students by having the information about the types of ships and the jobs a person would have on a ship. Check on their progress as they write their essay.

Closure:

What was it like to be a sailor during the War of 1812?

Independent Practice:

The independent work is the essay.

Extended Activities:

1. Teach the students how to tie knots. Explain why the knots were important to a sailor.
2. Take the students on a field trip to the Clayton's Antique Boat Museum or another similar museum in your area.
3. Have students research the different naval battles during the War of 1812 and present their findings.

Websites:

1. <http://www.hamilton-scourge.city.Hamilton.on.ca/war1812.htm>
This site offers a lot of information about the War of 1812 and information on the ships used during the war and about the sailors and their jobs during the war. The site has a lot of photos and drawings that are appealing to the students.
2. <http://www.galafilm.com/1812/e/index.html>
This site offers a lot of information on the War of 1812. It lists the battles and events of the war. There is a section that gives you information on shipbuilding on Lake Ontario during this period. It is a great site for the teacher and the students.
3. <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/index.html#anchor2448>
The site gives information on the War of 1812 and gives the navy Regulations for 1814. The site describes in detail the duties of each person on the ship and what is expected of you to wear as a uniform.
4. <http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/Alley/5443/supfig.htm>
The site offers the history of the ships of the War of 1812.
5. <http://www.columbia.edu/~gp350/gabe/1812>
The site gives the history of the ships during the War of 1812 and offers some great pictures of the ships.
6. <http://infa.abo.fi/~fredrik/sships>
The site has great details of information on ships.



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Resources:

1. Seaway Trail Guidebook to the War of 1812” Patrick Wilder, Seaway Trail, Inc., 1987, ISBN 0943689023
2. “A Signal Victory: The Lake Erie Campaign 1812-1813” David Curtis Skaggs, Gerard Atloff, Naval Institute Press, May 2000 ISBN 1557508925
3. “Lords of the Lake” Robert Malcomson, Naval Institute Press, 1998, ISBN 1557505322
4. “The Naval War of 1812” Theodore Roosevelt, Modern Library, May 1999, ISBN 0375754199
5. “The Encyclopedia of Ships” Tony Gibbons, Thunder Bay Press, Sept 2001 ISBN 1571452966
6. “Ashley Book of Knots” Clifford Ashley, Doubleday, June 1944, ISBN 0385040253

Books for Students:

1. “Oars, Sails and Steam: A picture Book of Ships” Edwin Tunis, John Hopkins University, Sept 2002 ISBN 0801869323 (ages 9-12)
2. “Mega Book on Ships” Lynne Gibbs, Chrysalis Children Books, July 2003, (ages 9-12)
3. “Into the Wind” Jean Ferris, Demco Media, June 1996, AISN 060694709 (ages young adult)
4. “Born in the Breezes: The Seafaring Life of Joshua Slocum” Kathryn Lasky, Orchard Books, Nov. 2001, ISBN 0439293057 (ages 4-8)
5. “Sailing Home: A Story of a Childhood at Sea” Gloria Rand, North South Books, Sept 2001, ISBN 0735815399 (ages 4-8)
6. “Sailor, Whalers, Fantastic Sea Voyages: An Activity Guide to North American Sailing Life” Valerie Petrillo, Chicago Review Press, June 2003, ISBN 1556524757 (ages 9-12)
7. “The Sailor Who Captured the Sea: A Story of the Book of Kells” Deborah Nourse Laltimore, Harpercollins, March 1991, AISN 9991045279 (ages 9-12)