

Social Studies Content Themes for Elementary/Middle School
From
“The Making of Milwaukee Curriculum”

Economics:

Teaching about Economics in Milwaukee

The following activities are from “The Making of Milwaukee” on-line curriculum.

- **The Solomon Juneau Catalog**
- **The Good In Grain (Creating a Commercial)**
- **Schooners in Milwaukee (Analyzing a Photograph)**
- **Taking it to the Streets (Fieldtrip)**
- **No Grain, Let’s Entertain (Fieldtrip)**
- **Everyone Works (Discussing Chores and Jobs)**
- **Gearing Up To Study Milwaukee (Analyzing a Photo)**
- **Advertising for a Milwaukee Company**
- **Making Sacrifices (Discussing Sacrifices People Make)**
- **From Poverty to Prosperity: Solving Two Mysteries**

THE SOLOMON JUNEAU CATALOG

Teachers may want to consider viewing the following websites with students before completing this activity:

<http://www.jcpenney.com/jcp/default.aspx>

http://www.sears.com/sr/javasr/home.do?BV_UseBVCookie=Yes&vertical=SEARS

<http://www.gandermountain.com/>

<http://www.eddiebauer.com/eb/default.asp>

1. After watching the Video Chapter 1, *Natives and Traders*, review with students the entrepreneurship of Solomon Juneau as a trader. Point out and describe the items he sold or traded (various furs, beads, blankets, axe heads, bells, etc) and how customers used them in their everyday lives.
2. Have students research the items Juneau sold at his trading post. Using resources such as textbooks, encyclopedias, library books or the Internet, have students take notes on the design, descriptions and uses of these items.
3. After thorough research has been conducted, have students create a product catalog for Juneau’s trading post. The catalog should contain the following:
 - An enticing, attractive cover
 - Photographs or drawings of the products
 - Brief descriptions of the products and the advantages they offer to potential buyers

Follow-up Learning Activity:

Students may exchange catalogs and participate in a peer evaluation process during which they identify the strengths/weaknesses of the product catalogs.

THE GOOD IN GRAIN

1. After viewing Video Chapter 3, *King Wheat*, review the importance of wheat in Milwaukee. The review can also include a brief discussion of the following questions:
 - What allowed Milwaukee to have a global impact on the grain trade?
 - What were the effects of wheat on Milwaukee's economy and development?
 - What other industries were affected by the grain trade?
2. Have students create a commercial advertising the wonderful, unique wheat grown only in the state of Wisconsin. Students can form groups of 2 or 3 to create a commercial or work as individuals

Note to Teachers: First, you may want to give students the opportunity to research wheat (its uses, where its grown today in Wisconsin, price, appearance, etc).

3. Knowing the significance of wheat, have students create commercials that include the following criteria:
 - Created in the 1800's perspective
 - Background information on wheat (where it's grown, how it's grown, how it's used)
 - Description of wheat (color, size, weight, physical features)
 - Rationale for why potential customers should buy wheat
 - A price for customers to consider
 - Use of persuasive language
 - A catchy slogan
 - Props (actual stalk of wheat or replica)
 - 1 minute time limit
4. Give students planning time to create and rehearse commercials (Preparation time may vary according to class size, ability, scheduling, etc).
5. Upon completion of the preparation phase, students will then be given one minute to present their commercials to the class. Videotape the students' commercials and invite other grade levels, classes, schools and parents to attend a showing.

SCHOONERS IN MILWAUKEE

Wisconsin Historical Society Website (www.wisconsinhistory.org)

You can also see this picture in *The Making of Milwaukee* book by John Gurda.



1. Have students study the photograph of a schooner used in Milwaukee during the 1800s.

*Go to the “Image Library” of the “In the Classroom” section of *The Making of Milwaukee* website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com to find a variety of images showcasing schooners. Choose “Lesson Activity Images” from the pull down menu and use the “search” tool to locate photos entitled: “Schooners in Downtown Milwaukee, Sidewheel Steamboat, and Dean Richmond Schooner”.*

2. Discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups:

- How might this schooner have been used in Milwaukee?
- How do you think it changed the way goods were transported throughout the region?
- What effect did schooners have on the economy and job market in Milwaukee?
- What are the strengths/weaknesses of schooners?
- How safe and reliable do you think schooners were in the 1800s? Explain.
- What changes would you have made to the design of schooners?
- What modes of transportation have replaced schooners?

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

1. Have students study and analyze photographs of Old Milwaukee. Visit websites such as www.wisconsinhistory.org and *The Making of Milwaukee* website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com to find photos of Milwaukee in its early years. Try to find pictures that show businesses and markets residents used to obtain goods and services (See *Milwaukee Streets: The Stories Behind Their Names* by Carl Baehr, published in 1995 by Cream City Press, as an additional resource for this activity).
2. Encourage students to describe the buildings, people or landscapes in the photographs and discuss the importance of businesses in Milwaukee’s developing years.
3. Plan a trip to downtown Milwaukee. Set an interview with a local business owner. These interviews should focus on the following:

- Why owners chose to establish businesses
 - The location of the business in the downtown Milwaukee area
 - How its products/services help Milwaukeeans
 - How long its been in operation
 - Revenues and expenses
 - The types of people it serves
4. During the trip, allow students to take photographs of the buildings, bridges and monuments and restaurants located in the downtown area.
 5. After photos have been developed, scan or project digital images onto a screen utilizing PowerPoint. Students may also create a picture board. Have students present their photographs and explain how Milwaukee has changed since the early 1800s.
 6. Encourage students to analyze the pictures to find comparisons and differences in the buildings, business and landscapes from both eras.

NO GRAIN, LET'S ENTERTAIN!

1. Organize a trip to the Grain Exchange. Try to coordinate a tour of the building and its historical exterior, architecture, windows, woodwork and rooms.
2. As students tour the building, have them take notes and write 10 questions about the exchange, its formal and current functions, and its connections to the Milwaukee community.

Follow-up Learning Activities:

- Have students create a quiz about the field trip for their classmates to take. Administer the quizzes randomly to students upon return from the trip (Students should take the quiz of another student. They can be multiple choice or short answer). Allow students to correct the quizzes and discuss the results with their peers.
- Openly discuss students' experiences at the Grain Exchange and how different the Exchange is from its trading days.

EVERYONE WORKS

1. Have students think about their least favorite job, house chore or even school task they have ever had to do. Then ask students to individually write answers to the following questions:
 - Describe your least favorite job, house chore, or even school task?
 - What made this your least favorite?
 - What made you decide to do this task?

- Did you get any reward for doing it? If so, what was it?
 - Was it worth the reward? If no reward was given, would it have been worth any reward?
 - What would happen if you resisted or refused to do this chore?
 - Are there places where people are paid to do the chores that you do? Explain.
2. Using the think-pair-share teaching strategy, have students share and compare their answers with another student. Then ask some of them to share their answers with the rest of the class.
 3. Use their responses to explain to students that many people who came to Milwaukee worked in very challenging jobs with often little pay in return. However, many were forced to do this labor to make a living for themselves and their families. When they refused or resisted, they often faced harsh consequences like getting fired from their jobs or being unable to support themselves or their families. In other words, progress often came with a fair share of struggle.

GEARING UP TO STUDY MILWAUKEE

This activity requires access to the accompanying book, *The Making of Milwaukee*, by John Gurda or the accompanying website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com

1. Show students the photo of the man standing next to the huge gear produced by the Falk Company in the book chapter entitled, “*Triumph of the Workingman*”.
2. Or, go to the “Image Library” within the “In The Classroom” section of *The Making of Milwaukee* website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com and choose “Lesson Activity Images” from the pull down menu. Use the “search” tool to find the photo of the “Falk Corporation Big Gears and Man”.
3. Ask students to answer the following questions about the photograph. If time permits, the teacher could alternatively ask students to write a brief story about the photograph addressing the issues in these questions.
 - What is going on in this photograph?
 - What are the large circular objects? What might they be used for?
 - How were these objects created?
 - What is the relationship between the man in the photograph and these objects?
 - If we guessed that he had some role in making these large objects, how much do you think he was paid to do this work? Do you think this was enjoyable work? What might have been the challenges of work like this?
 - Do you think these objects or this type of work exists today?
 - How do you think this photograph relates to the themes described in Chapter 6, *City of Industries*, and Chapter 8, *Machine Shop of the World*, of the video?

4. The teacher should discuss students' answers to these questions or if students wrote stories, their descriptions of the photograph. To begin with, the teacher should emphasize that with any historical photograph, there is a difference between making educated guesses about what is going in the photograph and what we actually know about the photograph. This photograph was taken at the Falk Company in the Menomonee Valley, a company that initially brewed beer but became the largest manufacturer of gears in the country. The photograph leaves much to the imagination. It is not fully clear what the immense gears like the ones in the photograph might be used for (possibly milling flour), but the Falk Company created gears for a wide variety of purposes, even the gears that opened and closed the lock gates on the Panama Canal. It's also uncertain how the gears were made, but cast molds were often used to craft gears and other mechanical products in Milwaukee. Other ideas to mention with the photograph in conjunction with students' response might include the idea that average salaries for industrial workers were often low (no more than a dollar and a quarter a day) and conditions were often rough with workers often working 10 to 12 hour days with no paid vacations or fringe benefits and little concern for their safety. At the same time, it is not clear whether the man in the photo would have been subjected to these same working conditions since working conditions varied between industries.
5. Finally, the teacher should mention that companies like the Falk Company and the products they produced made Milwaukee a "City of Industries" and the "Machine Shop of the World" during the late 1800's and early 1900's.

ADVERTISING FOR A MILWAUKEE COMPANY

*** Note to Teachers: One aspect of this lesson involves students creating an advertisement for Miller Brewing Company in Milwaukee. While Miller Brewing Company was a significant part Milwaukee's history, this activity is not intended in any way to promote the use of alcohol. Make sure you have several strategies to deal with any potential comments or issues related to students' work before using this activity.*

1. Go to the "Image Library" of the "In the Classroom" section of *The Making of Milwaukee* website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com and choose "Lesson Activity Images" from the pull down menu. Use the "search" tool to find the photos of advertisements for "Layton & Co., Pfister and Vogel, and Harley Davidson".

Then discuss the following questions with students:

- What is being used to attract customers to this product?
- Do you think this was effective in attracting customers during this time? Why? Why not?

- Do you think this would be effective in attracting customers today? Why? Why not?
 - Would you buy a product based on this ad? Why? Why not?
2. Now give students a product made by one of the following companies discussed in the video and have them use details from the video about these companies and their products to create an advertisement for the company's product. Students can use the chart from Activity 3, Labor Negotiations in Milwaukee, to help them see the products made by each company. Students could role play a television commercial, do an advertisement for a radio broadcast, or design a visual advertisement for a newspaper or magazine.
- The Milwaukee Iron Company
 - Miller Brewing Company
 - Allis-Chalmers Company
 - Harley Davidson Motorcycles
 - Allen-Bradley Company
 - A.O. Smith Company
 - Harnischfeger Company
 - Falk Company
 - Kearney and Trecker Company
 - Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance
3. Students should present their work to the class and be prepared to explain why they think people will buy their product based on their advertisement. You may have an outside party or even the class vote on the best advertisement and offer some type of prize. Students may work by themselves or in groups to complete this activity.

MAKING SACRIFICES

1. Ask students to think about the concept of making sacrifices by having them individually write down their favorite and least favorite activity at school.
2. Then ask them to explain what sort of reward it would take to get them to give up their favorite activity for a week and have it replaced with their least favorite activity. Challenge them to think even further about whether or not they would give up their favorite activity even if there was no guarantee that there would be a reward for them.
3. Use the think-pair-share teaching strategy to have students share and compare their answers with another student. Then ask some of them to share their answers with the rest of the class.
4. Use their responses to explain to students that many Milwaukeeans made enormous sacrifices for their families, city, and country between 1914 and 1945.

Some Milwaukeeans left home to risk their lives and fight in the World Wars during this period of time, others struggled through poverty and worked very difficult jobs to survive the Depression, many Hispanics and African Americans endured discrimination to find a better life in Milwaukee, and numerous Milwaukeeans went to work around the clock in factories to produce war materials for their country during the war.

5. Have students compare their responses to discuss why Milwaukeeans might have made such sacrifices during this period of time even without any guarantee of a reward.

FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY: SOLVING TWO MYSTERIES

The following learning activity, mystery story, and two leading questions can be used before viewing Video Chapter 15, *The Exploding Metropolis*.

1. First, the teacher reads aloud the passage that follows with two built-in mysteries. The teacher should use an overhead to project the mystery passage so that students can both hear and see various clues.
2. After reading the story, the teacher poses one of the mystery questions at a time which helps direct students as they attempt to solve each mystery by posing questions to the teacher that can only be answered with a “yes” or “no” answer.
3. Give the students “think time” to think about the first question and to create questions that can be answered “yes” or “no”. (The forming of questions can be done individually or in small groups with students taking turns as they pose questions.)
4. Let the student questioning begin. The teacher records a “yes” or “no” answer to each question as well as the nature of each question on the board or overhead so students can keep track of the clues or data collected. (During the Q and A session it is essential that the teacher consistently ask students: “*What clues did you see or hear that prompted you to ask that question?*” Give as much positive feedback for logical questions as you do for questions that can be answered with a “yes”).
5. After a few questions have been posed, instruct students to regroup so they can think about the clues and collected data thus far and construct new questions.
6. After a few minutes, begin the Q and A session again and continue until students believe they have an answer. (If a student believes they have the correct answer, they must tell the teacher before speaking it aloud in order to provide the teacher with the option of having the student wait for a few more questions to be posed by other students before stating what they think.)
7. The Q and A session is over when the right answer is determined, when either the teacher or students believe they are stumped, or if students have gotten as close as

possible. (This latter option is definitely acceptable, especially if students have little background knowledge on the topic).

The Mystery Passage (with mystery questions 1 and 2):

For 15 years most Milwaukee citizens struggled and sacrificed in order to make ends meet and keep their families together. They went without many of life's small pleasures when even gas, flour, and sugar were very difficult to get even if they were able to scrape together enough money to buy them. Big families lived together in very small houses in order to help take care of each other as well as save money. Men, women, and young adults worked long hours every day, seven days a week in order to help themselves, their families, and their country. They saved small items like string, rags, paper, and tin. They used every vacant piece of land for community gardens in order to conserve their food supply. And, while Milwaukeeans dreamed for a better, more prosperous life for themselves, their families, and their country, they did not waiver in their efforts to keep working.

And then, suddenly, the 15 years of hard times, the scrimping, the struggling, the sacrifice, and the saving came to an end. The dreams and hopes that had been postponed were realized in just a few short years as prosperity swept Milwaukee like no other time in history. People were determined to build a new and better world. New businesses and industry and the jobs that followed helped families earn a better living. Many babies were born to families who had put off having children because previous times were just too hard. Thousands purchased modern conveniences such as cars, televisions, and refrigerator-freezers. New houses were built and people moved to new neighborhoods. All these new babies and houses in new neighborhoods caused a need for many new schools in Milwaukee. Shopping centers and freeways emerged to get Milwaukee citizens on the move as never before. The people of Milwaukee pursued the good life with zeal.

Mystery Question #1: *What happened to move Milwaukee from very hard and desperate times, from times of poverty to times of prosperity?* Be sure to let students completely explore question one before introducing question two. Use question two as an added mystery.

Question #2: Before reading question two, add to the mystery by reading and showing this additional, brief passage to students before the yes and no questioning strategy resumes:

But, wait a minute, the mystery is not complete and, therefore, misleading. While these prosperous times allowed many Milwaukee people access to the "good and prosperous life", other Milwaukee citizens were left behind and even denied access to the "good and prosperous life". Many people flocked to Milwaukee as its booming economy offered jobs, decent housing, and entertaining city features on a great lake. However, some

newcomers met with resistance and resentment. And while many of them did find jobs, few escaped poverty, and most lived in very old houses with very little or no income to pursue the “good life”.

Mystery Question #2: *Why was the prosperous life, the “good life”, true for some and not others?*

***Regardless of whether the students come up with the exact answers, these puzzlers can be used to introduce Video Chapter 15 and set the stage for discovering, through the video, specific answers to questions they may have raised during the Q and A sessions. If students want to pursue why African American citizens of Milwaukee were left behind, encourage them to listen for reasons within Video Chapter 15 and assure them that you will investigate these issues further as you engage in the film response activity to follow, *“Resistance, Resentment, and Racism”*.