

**Teaching and Learning Strategies for Elementary/Middle School
From
*“The Making of Milwaukee” Curriculum***

**Primary Sources:
Teaching and Learning about Milwaukee
through Primary Source Analysis**

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

- **What’s in a Photo? (Photo Analysis)**
- **I Regret I did not Come Sooner (Letter Quote Analysis)**
- **Gearing Up to Study Milwaukee (Photo Analysis)**

WHAT’S IN A PHOTO?

You can access these photos in *The Making of Milwaukee* book by John Gurda.

Photo of bridge at Chestnut Street in 1845 in Gurda’s 2nd book Chapter, “*City on the Swamp*”.

Photo of Hoan Bridge in Gurda’s 9th book Chapter, “*Shifting Currents*”.

These photos are also available as still images on The Making of Milwaukee website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com. Go to the Image Library within the “In the Classroom” section and select “Transportation” from the pull-down menu. Be sure to use the “search” tool.

1. Discuss the following questions concerning the photographs of two distinct bridges in Milwaukee:

- How are the two bridges different?
- What similarities do you see between both bridges?
- What contributing factors (societal, economical, political) do you think caused these differences?
- How do the designs of these two bridges reflect the eras in which they were built (technology, city’s needs, resources, etc)?
- What were the functions and purposes of both bridges?
- What controversies surround the functions and purposes of these bridges being built? (Teacher may want to provide background on the Hoan bridge)
- What types of bridges do you see being built in Milwaukee one hundred years from now? Give your reasoning for this design.

2. Challenge students to design and build a bridge of their own. Have them form groups of three or four to plan and discuss the features of the bridge. Share with students the following criteria:
 - a. Bridge must meet the needs of the people of Milwaukee in 2006. Brainstorm on ways that your bridge will make life better in Milwaukee.
 - b. Bridges can also be designed on paper. Students can provide a drawing or an original, computer-generated model.
 - c. Students can provide a written/oral summary that addresses the following questions:
 - What challenges do you foresee in creating this bridge?
 - Where in Milwaukee will this bridge be located? Why did you choose this location?
 - How will this bridge improve the quality of life in Milwaukee?
 - What sacrifices might the public have to endure as you build this bridge (street closures, pollution, noise, etc)?
 - What controversies may possibly surround the construction of your bridge? How might you tactfully resolve this negative association with your bridge?
 - d. Any material can be used to build the bridge (Toothpicks, tongue depressors, and glue are examples of the types of inexpensive materials that can be used to build bridges).
 - e. Bridges can be displayed in small groups or in a class viewing. Short presentations that incorporate responses to the previous questions may be performed by students.

I REGRET I DID NOT COME SOONER

At the end of Video Chapter 5, *Neighbors and Strangers*, a German immigrant wrote the following line in a letter home:

“I thank the Lord that I am here, and I regret I did not come sooner”

1. Read this quote to students or write it on the board and discuss the following questions with this perspective on “Coming to Milwaukee”:
 - What might have caused this immigrant to feel this way about Milwaukee?

- Why might other German immigrants have agreed with the idea expressed in the letter?
- Do you think there were Germans who may have disagreed with the idea expressed here? Explain why some may have not felt this way.
- Do you think members of the other groups who came to Milwaukee felt the same way as the idea expressed in this letter? In what ways might they have shared this perspective? In what ways might they have not shared this perspective?
- Based on your experiences with Milwaukee today, do you think you would feel the same way as this immigrant after living here? Why? Why not?

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.