Wisconsin Hometown Stories: Wausau

Essential Questions – High School

Wisconsin Hometown Stories: High School Curriculum

Chapter 1: White Pines and White Water

Enduring Understanding

*Geography defines a community's past, present and future.*

**Essential Questions**

1. What geographic features drew people to Wausau?
2. How were natural resources manipulated?
3. How did geography effect economy, social structure, occupations and transportations?
4. What benefits were so high that death was an acceptable consequence?
5. How did the frontier mentality affect the settlement of Wausau?

**Discussion Questions**

1. How did the way in which the land was obtained for economic development contribute to future challenges?
2. What was Wausau originally called? Why was the name changed?
3. Why did Stevens call Wausau the best mill site he “ever saw and heard of?”
4. What were the geographic advantages and disadvantages of Wausau?
5. How did the early settlers of Wausau manipulate the geographic features to pursue their goals?

**Activities**

1. Identify the geographic features seen on the interactive bird’s eye map of Wausau in 1891. [http://www.wisconsinstories.org/wausau/gallery.cfm](http://www.wisconsinstories.org/wausau/gallery.cfm)
2. Compare the map of Big Bull Falls in the film (04:52) to the online bird’s eye map of Wausau.
3. Evaluate the significance of the geographic features seen in the maps.
4. Invite a local geographer to speak to the class about the significance of the geographic features in the Wausau area. (Contact UWMC or use Skype or Google video chat)
5. Imagine that you are a young man who has come to northern Wisconsin in the 1800s. Write a letter to your family back home that analyzes the pros and cons of working in this frontier environment.

**Standards Met in This Chapter**

Chapter 2: The Wausau Group

Enduring Understanding

Continued community prosperity in an era of diminishing resources requires diversification, adaptation and cooperation among competitors.

Essential Questions

1. Why did the natural resources diminish and how did this affect the community?
2. What new industries arose to meet this challenge and what impact did technology have?
3. What was the Wausau Group and what motivated them?

Discussion Questions

1. Why did the lumbermen begin to diversify their business interests?
2. Why did economic leaders choose to remain in Wausau? How did this affect the development of Wausau?
3. What would be challenging about running a national business from Wausau?
4. How was the creation of Employers Mutual Insurance a product of the Progressive Era?
5. Why did Wausau leaders choose to cooperate rather than compete with each other?

Activities

1. Visit Marathon Park and view the last white pine cut in the area. Measure its dimensions.
2. Research papermaking processes and debate which is “greener”—rag or pulpwood processes.
3. Identify businesses created by the Wausau Group and locate them on a map of Wausau. Which still exist and which no longer exist?
4. Create a “Then & Now “ map of Wausau by having students photograph significant historical sites (government buildings, businesses, homes, etc.) and compare these images to historical photos of the same sites. Online Resources:
   http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cwdp/
   http://www.marathoncountyhistory.org/OnlineHistory.php?ContentId=62
   http://www.marathoncountyhistory.org/OnlineHistory.php?ContentId=92
5. Create a “Fakebook” wall for the Wausau Group using biographical information from the video and online resources. Members would be able to post events, photos, status updates and comments discussing the events in this section of the video. Online Resources:
   http://www.marathoncountyhistory.org/OnlineHistory.php?ContentId=63
   http://myfakewall.com/
   http://www.classroots.net/fb/home/page
6. Research the history of Brokaw and compare it to life in other contemporary company towns.

Standards Met in This Chapter

Chapter 3: On the Map

Enduring Understanding

Continued innovation establishes Wausau’s national identity.

Essential Questions

1. How do innovations in this period enhance Wausau’s national identity?
2. How does geography continue to affect economic development in Wausau?
3. In what ways did Wausau strive for economic development, both nationally and internationally?
4. What examples of social stratification are evident?

Discussion Questions

1. How did national events affect Wausau?
2. How is Wood’s Ford Reliability Tour victory symbolic of the Wausau Group’s success?
3. In what ways did Wausau attract national attention?
4. How did the Great Depression impact the community?
5. What is the Wausau Story?
6. What qualities did the innovators who put Wausau on the map possess?
7. How did Wausau leaders use the media to put Wausau on the map?

Activities

1. Identify and locate New Deal projects in the Wausau area.
2. Create an advertising campaign for the city of Wausau today.
3. Identify the Wausau skyline buildings in the Wausau Insurance corporate logo. Design a logo for today.
4. Conduct a panel discussion that highlights the roles of various individuals in the community at the time. To what degree did they feel a connection to Wausau’s new national identity? Panel members could include a member of the Wausau Group, one of the Fromm Brothers, a ginseng worker, a CCC worker, a fox farm worker, a J---Bar operator on Rib Mountain, John Wood, the president of Wausau Insurance, a cook at the Fromm’s Clubhouse resort, or a fur auctioneer.
5. Research and map the route of the Ford Reliability Tour that Wood would have taken. Why was Wausau a stop on the tour?
6. Research the ginseng industry. What makes the Wausau area ideal for growing ginseng? What happened to the Fromm Bros. company?

Standards Met in This Chapter

Chapter 4: The Wausau Spirit

Enduring Understanding

Early city leaders created organizations to continue to provide greater artistic and cultural opportunities.

Essential Questions

1. Why did community leaders support the development of cultural opportunities?
2. How does Wausau compare in culture and the arts to other cities of its size?
3. What ways do all members of the community benefit from the cultural and artistic developments in Wausau?
4. What role did women play in the arts and cultural development of Wausau?
5. How did the contributors to Wausau’s arts and culture change over time?

Discussion Questions

1. What museums and arts programs have developed in Wausau? How do these compare to other cities of Wausau’s size?
2. What museums have you visited in Wausau and what has this taught you about the community?
3. Which Wausau leaders have contributed to the cultural development of Wausau?
4. How has the legacy of cultural development continued?
5. In what ways would Wausau be different today had women not played such a large role in the development of the arts and culture?
6. How has the community continued to embrace and support cultural development?
7. What is the origin of philanthropic organizations and what is their legacy in Wausau?

Activities

1. Visit the “Birds in Art” exhibit at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum. Why does this exhibit possess international significance in the art world?
2. Visit the area’s historical museums such as the Yawkey House and the Woodson Historical Center. How are these sites resources for understanding the community?
3. Select one of the area’s local philanthropic foundations and interview a Board member about the group’s mission and legacy in the community.

Standards Met in This Chapter

Chapter 5: The Hmong Journey

Enduring Understanding

An influx of immigrants presents a community with challenges and opportunities.

Essential Questions

1. What factors created Hmong immigration?
2. What challenges and successes have Hmong people encountered since coming to Wausau?
3. How did Hmong immigration change the Wausau community?
4. How did the Hmong experience differ from earlier immigrant groups?

Discussion Questions

1. What role did the Hmong play in the war in Southeast Asia?
2. What push and pull forces motivated Hmong immigration?
3. How is assimilation evident in the Hmong community? What has been gained and what has been lost?
4. How have the Hmong contributed to productivity and progress in Wausau?
5. How has Wausau changed because of Hmong immigration?
6. Compare and contrast the Hmong experience with that of other immigrant groups.
7. What other ethnic groups have contributed to Wausau’s economic development and cultural diversity?

Activities

1. Interview a first generation Southeast Asian immigrant about their experiences in Laos and since arriving in the Wausau area.
2. Create a graphic representation that reflects the changes in Wausau’s demographics over time.
3. Locate newspaper articles on the controversy surrounding the Wausau School District’s partner schools endeavor in the early 1990s. Compare this to desegregation and busing controversies experienced by public schools in the South in the 1950s and 1960s, Boston in the 1970s, and today’s school voucher program in Milwaukee. Write a letter to the editor stating your position on this issue.

Standards Met in This Chapter

Chapter 6: Connections

Enduring Understanding

Reinvestment in a community remains essential for its continued progress and growth.

Essential Questions

1. How does the legacy of community development continue in Wausau?
2. How did industrial development evolve since the early days of Wausau?
3. How does geography remain significant to the Wausau community?
4. How do the community’s values continue to lead Wausau into the future?

Discussion Questions

1. What geographic features continue to be important for Wausau?
2. Has the impact and utilization of geography changed since the early days of Wausau?
3. How has Wausau’s economy evolved since its early days?
4. How do Wausau’s contemporary values compare to the early community’s values?
5. How is Wausau’s commitment to community visible today?
6. Is Wausau a special or unique place to live?

Activities

1. Contact the YWCA at 715.842.3381 to receive information about the Women of Vision program. Interview a past or current recipient of the “Women of Vision” award. Compare and contrast with notable women of Wausau’s past.
2. Attend a kayak event on the Wisconsin River. Interview an organizer of the event or a participant. Among other questions, ask their opinion of Wausau.
3. Imagine that you are George Stevens or Walter McIndoe and you have time traveled from early Wausau to contemporary Wausau. Write a journal entry of your impression and experiences of Wausau today.
4. Write an essay predicting Wausau’s future twenty years from today.
5. Walk along the River Walk. Record any historical evidence and changes to the river environment that you discover. Explain the significance of what you have found.
6. Explore the Chamber of Commerce website, www.wausauchamber.com. Take part in a panel discussion evaluating which Wausau values are reflected in the Chamber of Commerce.
7. As part of a small group, visit and explore the City of Wausau website www.ci.wausau.wi.us. The site is divided into Live, Work, Visit, and Government sections. As part of a panel, present what your findings to the rest of your class. Assess the vision and values of contemporary Wausau. Also, compare this to the values of early Wausau.
8. Have students create a geocaching activity at various sites in Wausau using Getting Started with Geocaching at www.geocaching.com. The site will make suggestions for items to be placed in the geocache. Cache contents can be historical, informative, tradable or something of the student’s choice. For example, photos and documents can be cached. Hide the cache at historical or other significant places in Wausau. Students should be able to explain why they selected their locations and why they placed the items they chose in their caches. The activity should reflect the growth and development of Wausau.

Standards Met in This Chapter

Resources Books—

Nonfiction


Fiction


Websites

Use this site to compare the modern lumbering industry with the challenges early lumberjacks faced in central Wisconsin.

http://www.history.com/shows/ax-men

Learn about the history of the Fromm Brothers’ famous farm in central Wisconsin where the silver fox and ginseng created a true Wisconsin success story.

http://frommhistory.org/

The Wisconsin Historical Society has an extensive image database in addition to other resources that relate to Marathon County and Wausau.

http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/

The Marathon County Historical Society has excellent resources available online and at the Woodson History Center in Wausau.

http://marathoncountyhistory.org/
Using Animoto

Create a Video Project

I. Research
Visit the Marathon County Historical Society website to review videos and biographies relevant to your selected Wausau Group member.

II. Storage
Create a folder on the server for saving your project including related documents images and sounds.

III. Brainstorming
Compile key words, phrases and images pertinent to your Wausau Group member, including their contributions to the Wausau community.

IV. Images
- Gather images and/or video clips for your project. (You will need about 8 to 15 images for 30 seconds of video.)
- Images will need to be saved as JPG, JPEG or GIF files. Animoto recommends that images by 640X480 or larger. You must include an image of the person. (Images can be found at the Marathon County Historical Society website.)
- To capture images, place your cursor on the image and right click. Select “save image as” and save to your project folder.
- You will also need to include as many other historical images from the time period as possible—which could include original photos or videos of historic homes, gravesites, etc. (Use the image search on the Wisconsin State Historical Society.)

V. Sounds
Create a soundtrack using royalty-free music only. Soundzabound and Badgerlink contain historically accurate music selections. (Check with your school library to access the Badgerlink site using your public library card.) MP3 files will save to your desktop by default, and will need to be moved to your project folder.

VI. Credits
Separate slides will need to be created in PowerPoint to include works cited and media resources. Slides will need to be formatted to include a black background and white letters in a 32-point font. Save the PowerPoint file to your project folder as a JGP or JPEG. Formal bibliographic form is not necessary since this project will only be shared within the classroom, for example phrases like “Music from Soundzabound.com” is acceptable.

VII. Create an Animoto Account
If you are 13 and have an email address, you may use your teacher’s educator code to create an account of your own. DO NOT CREATE A FREE ACCOUNT! BE SURE TO USE THE PROMO CODE WHEN CREATING YOUR ACCOUNT. If you are not 13 or do not have an email account, please see your teacher.

VIII. Creating & Sharing
Create your video project using Animoto. Using the educator code to set up your Animoto account will allow you to create trailers longer than 30 seconds. Once you have created your Animoto video, download the file as an MP4 to your project folder—and share with your class!