Wisconsin Hometown Stories: Wausau
Essential Questions – Middle School

Chapter 1: White Pines and White Water

Enduring Understanding

Geography defines a community’s past, present and future.

Essential Questions

1. What was Wausau like before European settlement?
2. What made Wausau an ideal site for a city to develop?
3. What brought people to Wausau? (Gender separation)
4. How was the river used then and now?
5. How has the railroad allowed Wausau to evolve?

Discussion Questions

1. Why did the early settlers choose to come to Wausau?
2. What geographical features made Wausau an attractive place to settle?
3. What was the Wausau area like before George Stevens settled there in 1839?
4. What was the Indian Strip? What was Wausau’s original name?
5. Why did Walter McIndoe change the name?
6. Why would old-timers not recognize the river today?
7. What were some of the hazards that made moving logs down the river dangerous/difficult?
8. What did August Kickbush contribute to Wausau?
9. What did Walter McIndoe contribute to Wausau?
10. How has the railroad allowed Wausau to evolve?
11. What does the term “value added” mean in reference to Wausau?

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pinery</th>
<th>resource</th>
<th>exploit</th>
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<tr>
<td>ceded</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>value---added</td>
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<td>immigrant</td>
<td>emigrant</td>
<td>treaty</td>
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<td>sophisticated</td>
<td>water power</td>
<td>planks</td>
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<tr>
<td>rafts</td>
<td>crib</td>
<td>oars</td>
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Activities

1. Students will create a “lumber chain” using pictures that represent the steps from a standing pine tree to “value added” wood products. See Appendix A for Activity Sheet.
2. Use Google Earth to explore a map of Wausau. Point out geographic features that were important to the development of the community as well as the location of various structures. Use the coordinates provided in Appendix B to label five major historic sites in Wausau. Enter in the coordinates and plot waypoints to show important spots around Wausau.

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. How did the Wausau Group take advantage of emerging technology and new laws to benefit the community?
2. How does the legacy of the Wausau Group live on today?
3. Who would you put in the Wausau Group today?

Discussion Questions

1. Why does the Wausau Group form?
2. Why did people continue to make Wausau their home even when the lumber resources began to diminish?
3. Why do you think the Wausau Group cooperated with each other even though they were competitors?
4. What factors made the creation of Employers Mutual Insurance Company possible?
5. How did the Wausau economy diversify as white pine resources diminished?

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>harvest</th>
<th>economy</th>
<th>diversity</th>
<th>Wausau Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>transform</td>
<td>invest</td>
<td>veneer</td>
<td>insurance</td>
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Activities

1. Using the Smartboard or PDF provided, have students work in small groups or individually to complete the “Driving the Change” chart. Students will identify and sequence the events and causes/effects—and the impact they have today.
2. Divide the class into five groups. Assign each group one of the following: Alexander Stewart, Walter Alexander, D.C. Everest, Cyrus Yawkey or Neil Brown. Have students access the website “My Fake Wall” at [http://www.myfakewall.com/](http://www.myfakewall.com/) to create a profile for their assigned Wausau Group member. The profile should include a historically accurate photograph of the person as well as other profile information. In addition, the group will create “friends,” post status updates and responses to those updates. Students can also use material from the video, as well as short biographies provided by the Marathon County Historical Society’s website [http://marathoncountyhistory.com/People.php](http://marathoncountyhistory.com/People.php) to provide profile and status updates. Updates should be posted in a modern writing style, while remaining historically accurate (i.e., Just built my first sawmill. Big Bull Falls FTW!).

Standards Met in This Chapter

Chapter 3: On the Map

Enduring Understanding

*Continued innovation establishes Wausau’s national identity.*

**Essential Questions**

1. How did John Wood put Wausau on the map?
2. How did the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) help Wausau become a destination?
3. What innovations in ginseng farming and the fur industry did the Fromm Brothers employ to keep their business successful and benefit the community?
4. How did Employer’s Mutual Insurance Company expand their visibility on the national stage?

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why was an airport built in Wausau?
2. How did the Great Depression impact Wausau?
3. What did the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) build in the Wausau area?
4. How did the Fromm Brothers demonstrate the spirit of philanthropy?

**Vocabulary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aviation</th>
<th>CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps)</th>
<th>The Great Depression</th>
<th>encephalitis</th>
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<td>distemper</td>
<td>catered</td>
<td>inferiority complex</td>
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**Activities**

1. Using the Smartboard or PDF provided, have students work in small groups or individually to construct a Venn Diagram detailing things that created Wausau’s identity in the past—and continue to define our identity today.
2. Have students use Photo Story, a free program download from Microsoft ([Download Microsoft Photostory](#)) to create an advertisement or a promotional video for the city of Wausau. Students can focus on just one feature such as recreation or the arts, or provide a brief overview of Wausau’s best features.

**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. What role did women play in expanding cultural opportunities in Wausau?
2. What role did the arts play in the cultural development of Wausau?
3. How is the spirit of philanthropy started by early Wausau leaders still being felt today?
4. What options do we have for historical buildings?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think it was unusual for Mary Schofield to run her family's saw mill?
2. What was the purpose of the Ladies Literary Society?
3. What buildings and structures make a place a community?
4. What makes Wausau an artistic center?

Vocabulary

<table>
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<th>community</th>
<th>binder</th>
<th>philanthropy</th>
<th>nonprofit</th>
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<tr>
<td>restore</td>
<td>renovate</td>
<td>amenities</td>
<td>gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>citizen</td>
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Activities

1. Provide a list and photos of a variety of historical buildings in the Wausau area. Teachers can find a virtual book online found at the Marathon County Historical Society website (Big Bull Falls Building Guide) to show students historical buildings of Wausau. Have students select a building they feel should be listed as a property of historical significance. Criteria cited by the Wisconsin State Historical Society should be considered when making their selection (Eligible Property Criteria). Use the nomination form provided on the Wisconsin Historical Society website (Wisconsin History Nomination Form). The nomination form can be completed online and printed.

2. **Women of Vision** is a signature event put on by the YWCA for the Wausau area. Women from all walks of life have received this designation over the past 20 years. All of these women had a “strong desire to help others and a vision to make our communities better places in which to live.” Direct students to nominate one of the women highlighted in this chapter of the video such as Mary Scholfield, Helen VanVechnten, Leigh Yawkey Woodson or others of historical significance for the Women of Vision award. You may have students fill in and print the nomination form at the YWCA website YWCA Women of Vision.
3. Using the Smartboard or Pdf file provided, have students complete a graphic organizer that represents four core areas that illustrate the Wausau Spirit and its past and present influence 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. Why did the Hmong come to Wausau?
2. What common challenges do immigrant groups face?
3. How have the Hmong added to the cultural diversity of Wausau?
4. What generational changes occur within the immigrant experience?

Discussion Questions

1. Why have there been tensions in Wausau involving the Hmong?
2. How have the Hmong changed from the first generation to come to Wausau to the current generations?
3. Why are the students holding up blank story cloths on the stage?
4. What does the phrase “float or sink” mean in regards to Hmong refugees?
5. Why would the first generation of Hmong people in Wausau want to return to Laos? Why do later generations want to stay?

Vocabulary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>story cloth</th>
<th>congressional district</th>
<th>escalate</th>
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Activities

1. Use the Smartboard activity “Hmong Journey Generation Transition Chart” to help students understand changes that the Hmong have experienced since their journey to Wausau in the 1970s.
2. Contact Wausau School District Central Office at 715.261.0500 to borrow the South East Asia trunk. The trunk includes books, sample story clothes, clothing, cookware, etc.

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 tradition of reinvestment by the Wausau Group and others still benefit the community today?
2. How does the Wisconsin River continue to serve as an anchor for the community?
3. How do the names of early Wausau residents live on in the community today?

Discussion Questions

1. What is the spirit of the Wausau Group?
2. What economic activities expanded after WWII?
3. How is the Wisconsin River an anchor in the community?
4. What might be the next direction the Wausau economy takes as jobs in manufacturing and the paper industry decrease?

Vocabulary

| harvest | industry | foresight | cultural institutions |

Activities

1. Have students select an early Wausau leader such Walter McIndoe, August Kickbusch or the Fromm Brothers and use the Web 2.0 presentation tool Animoto for Education to create a one---to---two---minute video presentation that highlights the most important contributions of the individual to the Wausau community. Animoto is a wonderful Web 2.0 tool for creating classroom video and presentations with your students. Educators can apply for a free Animoto plus account at http://animoto.com/education/. Educators will receive a code to share with students that will allow students to have access to powerful features free of charge. Use the student activity sheet provided, or modify it to fit your needs.

2. Have students write a journal entry or letter from the perspective of an early Wausau resident that is viewing the community today. What has changed and what has stayed the same?

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/
Appendix A “Wisconsin River Lumber Chain”

Trees are selected based on size and value. White Pine, hemlock and spruce trees are the most desired.

Lumber from felled trees is carried to staging areas along river bank.

Valued trees are cut down or “felled” using hand saws and axes.

During high water spring time (as a result of snow melt) logs are pushed into the river.

Planks are turned into windows, doors, boxes, sashes and even toothpicks!

Logs are floated downriver using the natural current. Workers operate rafts on the river to help control the flow of the logs.

Logs are floated to mills located along the riverbank. Here they are turned into board feet or “planks.”

The planks are pegged together and floated downriver to finishing plants.

Logjams are formed along bends in the river, by logs catching on rocks, and by too many logs being run down the river. Jams are taken care of with dynamite or by removing the “Key Hole” log.
Appendix B

Sites to see in early Wausau (White Pine and Water Power)

Wausau Dam:

44° 57’ 28.25” N  
89°38’ 09.00” W

Rib Mountain:

44° 55’ 29.00” N  
89°41’ 17.00” W

Steven’s Mill:

44° 57’ 32.20” N  
89°38’ 02.00” W

Eau Claire River:

44° 55’ 1.60” N  
89°36’ 33.20” W

Wisconsin Valley Line (Grant Street Depot):

44° 57’ 42.50” N  
89°37’ 11.73” W
What was Wausau known for in the past? What is Wausau known for today? What was Wausau known for in the past and today?
Rib Mountain
Manufacturing
Paper Mills
Saw Mills
White Pine
Employers Mutual Insurance
Eastbay
Big Bull Falls

What was Wausau known for in the **past**?

Rib Mountain
Manufacturing
Paper Mills
Saw Mills
White Pine
Employers Mutual Insurance
Eastbay
Big Bull Falls

**What was Wausau known for in the past for in the past and today?**

Granite Peak Ski Area
Liberty Mutual Insurance
Tourism
Kayaking
Wisconsin River

**What is Wausau known for today?**

Wausau Group
Health Care Windows
Philanthropy

Procter & Gamble
Health Care Windows
Philanthropy

**What is Wausau known for today?**
What was Wausau known for in the past? What is Wausau known for today?

- Wausau Group
- Employers Mutual Insurance
- Saw Mills
- White Pine
- Big Bull Falls
- Granite Peak Ski Area
- Tourism
- Health Care
- Liberty Mutual Insurance
- Windows
- Eastbay
- Kayaking

What was Wausau known for in the past and today?
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<tr>
<th>Event/Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Impact on Today</th>
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<td>Event/Cause</td>
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<td>Impact on Today</td>
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<td>By the 1890's most of the mature White Pine was harvested.</td>
<td>Paper and value added products like doors, windows, toothpicks, veneers, and wood packaging.</td>
<td>We still have a paper, window, and wood packaging industry.</td>
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<td>Railroad arrives in 1874</td>
<td>Wausau's population grows rapidly, and new economic opportunities arrive.</td>
<td>Wausau is still a major north/south, east/west transportation hub.</td>
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<td>Paper making technology using wood instead of cloth fiber develops</td>
<td>The Wausau Group builds paper mills at Brokaw and Rothschild.</td>
<td>The paper industry is still a major employer in the Wausau area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Stevens arrives at Big Bull Falls in 1839.</td>
<td>Steven's build's the first Lumber Mill in the Wausau Area.</td>
<td>Wausau is the largest city in central Wisconsin today.</td>
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<td>Wausau Group forms</td>
<td>Wausau begins to evolve from a lumber town.</td>
<td>Wausau has grown as a community with a diverse economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance Law changes in 1911</td>
<td>Employers Mutual Insurance is formed in order to provide workman's compensation insurance.</td>
<td>Though Employers Mutual Insurance is gone, Liberty Mutual and Wausau Benefits are two of the largest employers in the Wausau area.</td>
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<td>Great Depression</td>
<td>Civilian Conservation Corp begins to construct the ski hill and the State Park on Rib Mountain.</td>
<td>Granite Peak Ski resort and Rib Mountain State Park are major tourist attractions in the Wausau area.</td>
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Mary William Schofield
Helen Von Nechten
Innovative Women Leaders
Ladies Literary Society
Community Performances
Grand Theater
Traveling Performances
Arts Block
Wausau
400 Block
Spirit of Community
Preservation
Donations
Philanthropy
Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum
Birds In Art
John and Alice Forrester
Philanthropy
WIMediaLab.org