

Fire!

Note to teachers: This supplement includes a discussion guide, lessons and Michigan Content Standards to use with the Michigan Time Traveler page. You may reproduce the pages in this supplement to use with students.

MASTERY QUESTIONS

(SOC 1.2. Comprehending the Past; SOC 2.2. Human/Environment Interaction)

- **The Day Michigan Burned.** What was the Great Fire of 1871? (burned east to west across lower Michigan) How many years ago did it happen? (2003/132) Why did the fire spread quickly? (lack of rain left forests tinder dry)
- **Excerpts from Kirk Shepard's "A Boy's Memory of the Big Fire."** What did Kirk see when he looked out the window? (red sky, fierce wind, blazing pieces of wood falling) How was Menominee saved? (wind changed direction) How do you think Kirk felt when his mother woke him up? How might you feel?
- **Fires and Change.** Who was Clara Barton? (founder of the American Red Cross) What was her first assignment? (relief for the 1871 fire in Michigan) What were people's attitudes during the 1871 fire in Michigan's Thumb? (worked hard, were generous)
- **Michigan Fires Time Line.** Name some other big fires in Michigan. (Ontonagon, Mertz, Fletcher Road, Seney, Mack Lake) Find these locations on a map of the state.

ACTIVITY ONE: Fire!

(SCI.III.5. Life Science/Ecosystems)

Research and discuss: Why is fire good for Kirtland's warblers? (They build their nests on the ground in young thick stands of 5-20 foot jack pine trees with live branches to the ground where there are small, brushy openings created after fire.) Why is fire good for lodgepole pines? (Fire causes pinecones to release their seeds. Their cones open only after reaching about 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Like jack pines, these pines cannot tolerate shade and need full sunlight to regenerate. Fire also creates open clearings and prepares the soil so the seedlings thrive.) Through research, discover other ways in which fire can benefit forests.

ACTIVITY TWO: Local, State, National and International News Stories

(SOC. II.2. Human/Environment)

Discuss: Natural disasters such as a fire can affect people individually—such as a fire in a home—or collectively—such as a forest fire. Sometimes a natural disaster is so damaging that the federal government needs to send help to a state including medical supplies, food, clothing, money and personnel to assist. Sometimes other disasters—such as volcano eruptions—affect people in one country and they need assistance from another country. Often the Red Cross is called in to assist. Make copies of the table on page three and give to students to complete. Ask students:

1. To find a newspaper article (not necessarily about disasters, although preferably) and determine whether it is a local, state, national or international event.
2. To read and review the article and complete the table. They need to answer these questions: Who? What? Where? Why? And How? Have them explain why it is a local, state, national or international story.
3. To give a brief oral report about the news event.

ACTIVITY THREE: Communicating in Time of Disaster

(Arts 2. Creating; ELA 6. Voice)

When there's a disaster, people have a great need to share with others. In the past, people wrote letters and postcards. Today people usually talk on the telephone or write e-mails. By sharing, perhaps it helps them feel not so alone at a time of great loss. Make copies and pass out page four with the photo of the Downy House (a hotel) fire in Lansing and the message on the back. Have students design a postcard and write to a friend or relative about a disaster or difficult event that happened in their lifetime—in their home or community.

ACTIVITY FOUR: Memory and Perspective: From Whose Perspective? First or Third Person?

(ELA 3. Meaning and Communication in Context; ELA 6. Voice; Arts 2. Creating)

Discuss: Kirk Shepard's reminiscence was written from his own perspective—in the first person. The memories are his own. Had his mother written about that day, she might have written it differently.

- Talk with students about the differences between their own perspectives on an event as compared to other people's perspectives on the same event. For example, they may remember an experience one way. Others may remember it differently. What factors will influence how they understand or remember the event? How would Kirk's memory of his experience differ from that of his mother's? How does age affect their perspective? How does their role in the family affect their perspective on the event? For example, how does Kirk's mother's role as the adult affect her role compared to Kirk's role as the child?
- Then, talk about the difference between writing from one's own perspective and writing about another person's perspective—the difference between the first person and the third person. What are the differences? What are the similarities?

Part I: Ask students to rewrite Kirk's story: From his mother's perspective of that day, or in the third person (as a reporter or biographer might do), write the story about Kirk's experience.

Part II: Ask students to illustrate the story.

ACTIVITY FIVE: Design a Poster

(SOC 1.2. Comprehending the Past; SOC 2.2. Human/Environment Interaction; SOC 5.1. Information Processing; SOC 5.2. Conducting Investigations)

- Ask students to divide into four or five groups and research different fires in Michigan that are listed in the time line. Use the Web sites listed below or other sites and/or go to the library to get the books listed below or find others.
- Have students design a poster based on their research. The poster should include:
 - o Historical information: date, place, the number of human casualties—those who died and/or were injured;
 - o How the fire was started;
 - o The extent of damage—the number of acres destroyed, the number of buildings, things that burned, weather conditions;
 - o People who helped out; kinds of help used—kinds of fire equipment.
- Have students present their poster and give an oral presentation about the fire they researched.

Two helpful books are:

Michigan on Fire by Betty Sodders. Thunder Bay Press, 1997

Michigan on Fire 2 by Betty Sodders. Thunder Bay Press, 1999

Web sites:

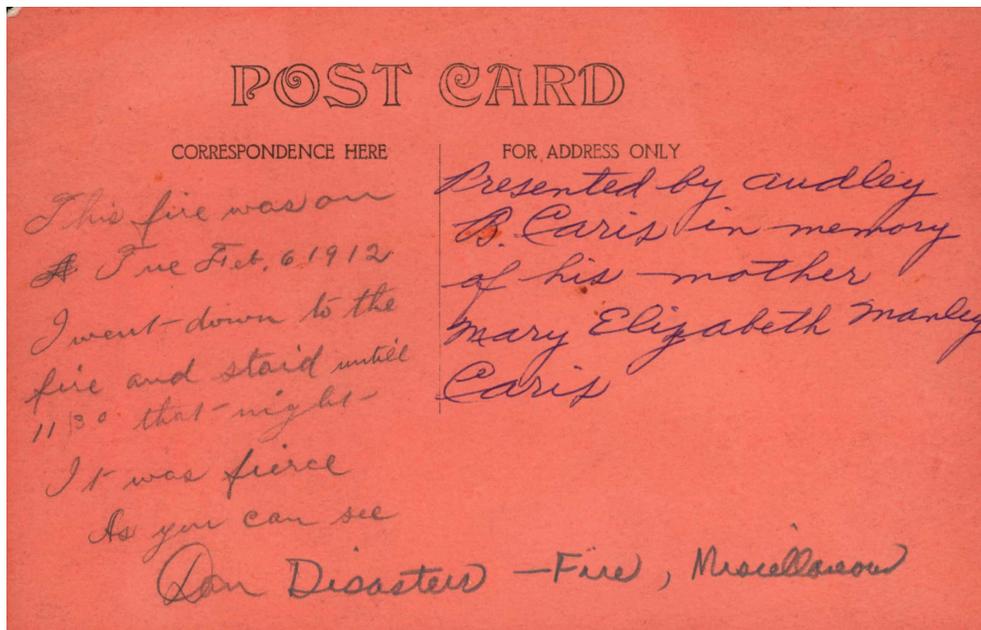
- History and Ecology of Fires in Michigan, an article prepared by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources: www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10367_11851-24038--,00.html
- Library of Congress information about the Great Fire of 1871 in the Midwest: memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/oct08.html
- State of Michigan, County of Sanilac, Record of Deaths, Sanilac County Clerk: www.rootsweb.com/~misanila/history/fires.html
- *Michigan History Magazine for Kids*: www.michiganhistorymagazine.com/kids/pdfs/mhksu02b.pdf
www.michiganhistorymagazine.com/kids/pdfs/mitten02.pdf
- United States Fire Administration: www.usfa.fema.gov/kids/
- United States Department of the Interior: www.nps.gov/fire/fire/ecology/docs/
- American Red Cross Fire Safety Tips: www.semredcross.org/news/pr/pr_2002/ds_092502.htm

Complete this table based on your research of a natural disaster.

Title of Article
Who is involved?
What happened?
Why did it happen?
Where did it happen?
How did it happen?
Is it a local, state, national or international story? Why?

Downey House Fire

The Downey House was a hotel in downtown Lansing on the corner of Washington Street and Washtenaw Street. It was rebuilt after the 1912 fire and renamed the Downey Hotel. It was demolished in 1936 to make way for the Knapp Building.



Message: This fire was on Tue Feb. 6 1912. I went down to the fire and staid until 11:30 that night. It was fierce. As you can see.

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