

Fort Wilkins

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

- **Living History at Fort Wilkins:** What is living history? What do role players do?
- **Fort Wilkins:** Where is Fort Wilkins? When was it built? Why was it built? What would you see if you visited it now? What would you like to see first? Why?
- **Voices from the Past:** Who was Lucena Brockway? How did she stay connected to her friends and family? Who was Ruth Douglass? What kind of an attitude did she have toward life in the north? Why?
- **Fort Wilkins Timeline:** When did soldiers live at Fort Wilkins? How many lighthouses were built at Copper Harbor? Why?

ACTIVITY ONE: Write a Letter

(SOC 1.2 Comprehending the Past; ELA.2. Meaning and Communication: Writing)

Background: In the 1860s, settlers wrote letters to stay in touch with family and friends who lived far away. Unlike today, people could not send e-mails, talk on the telephone or use fax machines. The time it took to communicate with people who lived at a distance was much greater than it is today. In 1869, a daily horse-drawn stage line carried mail between Houghton and Copper Harbor during the summer. Stopping at the Phoenix Hotel in Eagle River, it connected with a daily stage to Copper Harbor. Mail from Detroit would be one to three weeks old before it arrived. During the winter, Native Americans carried mail from Green Bay to L'Anse to Copper Harbor by dogsled. Mail arrived about once a month.

Discuss: Ask students if they ever write letters to friends or family who live far away. Do they receive letters from distant friends and family? Do they e-mail friends and family? Why do they choose to do one or the other? What are the advantages and disadvantages of writing letters or e-mails? Discuss the kinds of transportation used to carry mail today. How does mail delivery today compare to mail delivery in the past? What were some drawbacks to mail delivery in the past? What kinds of things could delay mail delivery? What are some drawbacks to mail delivery today?

Ask students to write a letter to Lucena Brockway or Ruth Douglas. Have them write about their lives today, including information about who they are, where they live and what they like to do. If they write about certain objects or events, make sure they think about whether or not those objects or events were around when Lucena and Ruth were alive and explain clearly what they are writing about.

ACTIVITY TWO: Role-Playing—Then and Now

(SOC 1.2 Comprehending the Past; SOC 1.3 Analyzing and Interpreting the Past)

When students role-play, they need to imagine another person, another time, another place. Role players not only dress up and act, but also try to live the past as the present and act as if it is the summer of 1870. Instead of saying, “This happened 150 years ago,” role players would say, “This is happening now.”

Divide students into small groups. Distribute the "Who's Who in Copper Harbor?" handout. Ask each student to select one of these characters to portray in the role-playing activity: John Holmes, Kate Holmes, Mrs. Mueller, Mr. Mueller, Charles Corgan, John Tuohy or John Tuohy (son). When not role-playing a character, the students will portray visitors of today. Ask students to research the 1860s as best they can using their textbooks, encyclopedia or library resources. They can also find information at these Web sites:

- Copper Harbor Lighthouse
www.sos.state.mi.us/history/museum/musewil/chlight.html
- Michigan Historical Museum Mining Gallery
www.sos.state.mi.us/history/museum/explore/museums/hismus/prehist/mining/index.html
- 20th and 21st Century America (time lines)
www.teacheroz.com/20thcent.htm

Students take turns portraying their character or a visitor. The "visitors" ask the character questions to try to determine who the character is and what his or her life was like. The character responds as though he or she is the person being interviewed. After all have taken their turns, debrief the exercise in a class discussion, sharing what students have learned about life during the 1860s.

ACTIVITY THREE: Imagine!

(ELA.2. Meaning and Communication: Writing, ELA 6.Voice)

Pass out copies of the passage “Scenery of Lake Superior” by Henry R. Schoolcraft on page four of this guide. It is quoted in B. Frank Emery’s, *The Old Forts and Historic Memorial Association, 1932*. Schoolcraft was a famous 19th century Indian agent, explorer, writer and student of Indian life and customs.

Today the view of the water looks just about the same. Have students close their eyes while you read the passage slowly. Ask them to imagine what the scenery around Lake Superior looked like. Then ask them to use words to describe what they see. What colors do they see? What textures do they see? What do things feel like—rocks, water, etc.? Ask students if any of them have been to Lake Superior. If so, ask them to describe it. What stone does Henry R. Schoolcraft write about in the passage? (agates, a hard semi-precious stone with stripes or clouded colors) What stones might they find that are Michigan state symbols? [Petoskey stone, a fossilized coral (*Hexagonaria pericarnata*) and greenstone (chlorastrolite, ranging in color from yellow-green to almost black with a turtle back pattern, usually found in the Upper Peninsula)]. Ask students to describe them and find out where they can find them. What kinds of colors can they see? How would it feel to be by Lake Superior?

Options:

- (1) Have students draw a picture based on Henry Schoolcraft’s description of *Scenery of Lake Superior*.
- (2) Have students write about place they have visited using words that someone else could use to paint a picture.

ACTIVITY FOUR: Keeping Diaries

(ELA 3. Meaning and Communication in Context)

People wrote diaries about daily events, visitors, their thoughts and feelings. Talk with students about diaries and why they can be useful to them. Find out if students keep a diary. Suggest that they begin keeping a diary over the summer. If they travel, they could keep a travel diary.

Who's Who in Copper Harbor

John and Kate Holmes: Lower class family that lived in the cabins outside the fort. He served as a private and she worked as one of the company laundresses. They had two small children and didn't have a lot of money. He made \$16 a month.

Mr. and Mrs. Mueller: Middle class family that lived at the fort. He was an officer (lieutenant) at Fort Wilkins. They lived in the officers' quarters and had two small children. He liked to complain a lot and didn't get along with the other officers.

Charles Corgan: Middle class Irish family. The Corgans lived next to the Tresise family near the harbor. They probably had a large two-story home. Charles Corgan served as the keeper of the Manitou Island Lighthouse. He also was on the school board.

John Tuohy (pronounced Too-EE). Hard working lower to lower middle class farming family. Tuohys lived near the Tresise and Corgan families and owned some land. They worked as farmers. Their children went to the Copper Harbor School, except the oldest boy John. He stayed home in the spring and summer to help out on the farm feeding cows and chickens and harvesting potatoes, corn and other crops.

Scenery of Lake Superior

By Henry R. Schoolcraft

This an excerpt from famous 19th century Indian agent, explorer, writer and student of Indian life and customs Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. Today the view of the water looks just about the same.

When the visitor to these remote and boundless waters comes to see this wide and varied scene of complicated geological disturbances and scenic magnificence, he is absorbed in wonder and astonishment. The eye once introduced to this panorama of waters, is never done looking and admiring. Scene after scene, cliff after cliff, island after island, and vista after vista are presented. One day's scenes of the traveler are but the prelude to another; and when weeks, and even months, have been spent in picturesque rambles along the shores, he has only to ascend some of its streams and go inland a few miles to find falls, and cascades and cataracts of the most beautiful and magnificent character. Go where he will, there is something to attract him. Beneath his feet are pebbles of agates; the water is of the most crystalline purity. The sky is filled, at sunset, with the most gorgeous piles of clouds. The air itself is of the purest and most inspiring kind.

Vocabulary:

Panorama: an unending view in all directions

Vista: a view seen through an opening such as through trees

Cataract: a big waterfall

Crystalline: like a crystal, clear, see-through