

Pewabic Tiles

Note to teachers: This supplement includes a discussion guide, lessons and Michigan Content Standards to use with the *Michigan Time Traveler* page published in the *Lansing State Journal* on March 10, 2004. You may reproduce the pages in this supplement to use with students.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (*SOC I. 2 Comprehending the Past; ARTS 4, Arts in Context*)

- **Mary Chase Perry Stratton.** Where was Mary Chase Perry Stratton born and in what year? (Hancock, Michigan, 1867). Who was Horace Caulkins? (her neighbor and partner; a dentist and business man who invented a kiln to make dentures and then built a kiln for firing ceramics) Who was William Buck Stratton? (an architect who designed the Pewabic Pottery building and eventually married Mary Chase Perry)
- **Discovering a Glaze.** What is a glaze? (a liquid applied to clay and heated at high temperatures to form a hard surface) What was special about Miss Perry's glazes? (iridescent) What does Pewabic mean? (Chippewa Indian for clay in copper color) Why did she choose that name for her pottery? (It was the name of a mine in her hometown where as a child, she used to walk with her father.) Do you have special names for pets or toys or other things that remind you of your past?
- **Why didn't Mary Chase Perry write recipes for glazes?** (She wanted people to discover new ones as she had.)
- **Making Tiles.** Put the steps on the board in random order and ask students to put them in sequence: Flatten a piece of clay. Pound clay into the mold. Wait for the clay to shrink. Remove the clay from the mold. Wait for the clay to dry more. Bake the clay in the kiln. Glaze the clay. Fire the clay in the kiln.

ACTIVITY ONE: Looking Back, Looking Forward (*SOC 1.4 Judging Decisions from the Past; SOC VI.2 Group Discussion; ELA 9 Depth of Understanding*)

Mary Chase Perry Stratton believed she became a ceramicist based on early childhood experiences. However, as a child she would not necessarily have known that those experiences would influence her work as an adult. What do they think of her explanation?

(1) First, discuss this phenomenon with your students—looking back in time as Stratton did trying to understand how her interest in pottery evolved. What are their interests now? (music, sports, hobby) When they were 5 or 7 years old, were there signs to indicate that these would become their interests? Ask them to try to imagine what they might do when they grow up.

(2) Then ask students to write an essay either describing:

- An experience they have had that they believe will affect choices they make in the future: Why was the experience important? How do you think it will effect choices you make in the future?
- A special interest they have that they think they expect to be a part of what they become as adults: Why is this interest important to you? How do you think it will effect what you do as an adult?

ACTIVITY TWO: Leaving Legacies (*SOC 1.4 Judging Decisions from the Past; SOC VI.2 Group Discussion*)

A legacy is anything that is passed on from one generation to the next. Have a discussion with students about Mary Chase Perry Stratton's legacy. Consider her decision about not leaving all her recipes for glazes to future generations. Ask students to describe what kind of a person they think she was? Do they think she was selfish? Generous? Fair? Unfair? Was she right about creativity?

ACTIVITY THREE: Art in Public Places—Should it just look good, have a function? Or both? (SOC 1.2 Comprehending the Past; SOC 1.3, Language; SOC V. 1 Information Processing; SOC VI.2 Group Discussion; ARTS 4, Arts in Context; ELA 6, Voice)

- Discuss the concept of art in public places with your students. Do they think it is important? Is art just to look at (a picture on a wall)? Or, can art be functional (a wall dividing two areas) or both—having function and beauty? When architects design buildings, do they think about self-expression and function?
- Ask students to research on the Internet or in the school library one of the places listed below in Michigan that have Pewabic Tiles or other art. Make copies of the worksheet on page 3 and have them complete it. Have a discussion about what they discovered.
 - **Pewabic Pottery:** www.pewabic.com/
 - **Detroit Zoological Institute (Detroit Zoo):** www.detroitzoo.org/critters2.html
 - **Cranbrook Educational Community:** www.cranbrook.edu/
 - **Detroit Institute of Arts:** www.dia.org/ specifically, have students look at: Yoko Ono's *Freight Train* on DIA's South Lawn www.dia.org/exhibitions/yoko.htm
 - **Belle Isle:** www.fobi.org/
- Ask students if they know of any public art in their community. Inside buildings, it might be on floors, ceilings, and walls. Outside it might be on walls, in yards or parks, on college campuses or on medians of roads. If you can schedule the time, take a field trip (a walking trip if your school is close to the center of town) into your community. Have students identify art in public places.

ACTIVITY FOUR: Design a Tile (ARTS 2 Creating)

Mary Chase Perry Stratton made many different designs for tiles based on her interests—children's fairy tales, animals, and historic scenes. They were used in schools, libraries, churches and monuments and were often part of larger works.

1. Using a spring theme, ask students what images come to mind.
2. List these on the board—ideas might include flowers, skating, boarding, biking.
3. Ask students to choose an image that means spring to them whether or not it is on the list.
4. Distribute the template for Design a Tile (page four).
5. Have them each draw their design.
6. Then, have them cut their tiles out and arrange them into a larger work on a large sheet of brown or white paper. (Table covers work well.) Have them consider the overall design including color, weight, balance, and feel.
7. When they are satisfied with their design, have them each glue their tile design to the sheet and hang the sheet on the wall.
8. Have them suggest titles for their overall design and vote for the title they like best. Mount it over their work.

Students will have created art in a public place!

ACTIVITY FIVE: Research a Michigan Artist or Illustrator (SOC 1.2 Comprehending the Past; SOC V 2 Conducting Investigations, ELA 6, Voice)

Ask students to go to the Michigan Department of History Arts and Libraries Web site (www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-15481_20826_20836---,00.html) and find famous Michigan artists and illustrators, or if your school is not connected to the Internet, have students use your school library. Have them give a brief oral presentation about the person they researched. Have them answer: Who was the person? When was the person born? Where did the person live? What contribution did the individual make to Michigan? Why was the person were important?

Art in Public Places

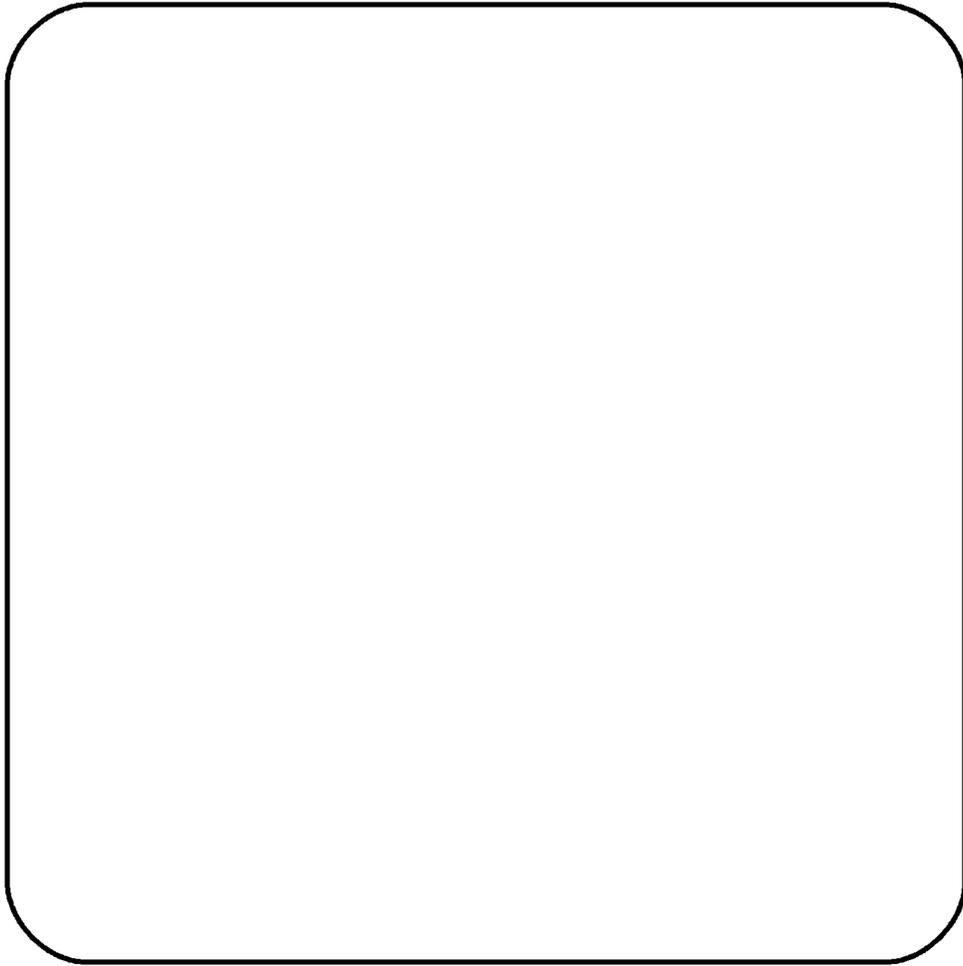
Name and describe the place you researched.

Who was the artist or who were the artists who created work for this place?

What kind of art did they produce?

Is the art interesting, beautiful or functional? Or all three?

Design a Tile



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