

Steamboats on Kootenay Lake

Concept(s) Continuity and Change, Cause and Consequence

Prepared for Grade(s) 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Province BC

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Time Period(s) 1800-1900, 1900-present

Time allotment Three class periods

Brief Description of the Task

In this activity, the students will examine the existence of communities in the Kootenay Lake, Arrow Lakes and Columbia River system in the context of their establishment and their existence today. Through research, the students will determine the factors that contributed to the establishment of the various communities in these areas in the 1800s and compare them to factors they contribute to the communities' existence/demise in recent times. The students will then examine the concept of what has changed and what has stayed the same in relation to these communities. Throughout, the students will examine the role the sternwheeler mode of travel played in the particular community's development. In conclusion, the students will assess whether the change they have identified contributed to the community's progress or decline.

Required Knowledge & Skills

Paddlewheel steamboats were a popular choice of transportation in the 1800s. The SS Beaver, a sidewheeler, was one of the first steamboats on the BC coast arriving from England in 1836. When a more efficient mode of transportation was needed to navigate the interior lakes and rivers, the sternwheeler model of steamboat was chosen due to its shallow draft. It drew less than a meter of water and had a flat bottom, which meant it could make a landing by shoving its prow against the bank while keeping the sternwheel out in deeper water. Many communities that developed on the Arrow Lakes, Kootenay Lake and Columbia River system depended quite heavily on the sternwheelers as a means of transportation and communication. As the mining development and communities in these areas grew, the need for larger and faster vessels increased. The Canadian Pacific Railway's interest in the Kootenay area also increased with the opening of the Crowsnest Pass and they purchased the fleet of existing sternwheelers. Rail travel and sternwheel travel became an interdependent commodity that played a significant role in the area's development over time.

Recommended Resources:

Affleck, Edward L. *Affleck's List of Sternwheelers and Other Larger Steamboats working on the Columbia River Waterways North of the 47th Parallel of Latitude, 1865-1965*. Vancouver, Alexander Nicholls Press, 1993, p. 49-50.

Baillie-Grohman, W. A. "Kootenay Country," Royal Geographical Journal, London, July 1918.

Turner, Robert D., Sternwheelers and Steam Tugs: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Pacific Railway's British Columbia Lake and River Service, Victoria BC, Sono Nis Press, 1984.

[Steam Navigation, The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)

<http://www.crowsnest.bc.ca/sternwheelers.html>

Shipwrecks, sites, maps and background:

<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/index.html>

<http://www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/cbasin/underwater/regional/htm>

<http://www.ccrh.org/comm/river/main.htm>

Required Materials:

- Spectra Art Kraft Duo Finish Paper roll. Cut two sheets of approximately one metre by three metres long.
- Coloured adhesive tape
- Push pins
- Yarn

Detailed Instructions

Lesson Preparation

The teacher is to obtain either a blackline master or an actual geographical map of southeastern British Columbia and make an overhead. Using an overhead projector, project image to an empty wall lined with two sheets of white Drug Paper (or the equivalent), thus creating a wall display of approximately two bulletin boards standing upright next to each other. Outline the waterways and river systems of the area in blue, focusing on the Kootenay Lake, the Arrow Lakes and the Columbia River system. It is particularly important to include the source and mouth of the Columbia River should the extension of the impact of hydro-electrical dams be carried out.

Lesson Sequence

1. The teacher is to provide a list of communities that were dependent on the sternwheeler and/or railways for a primary means of transportation in the 1800s such as: Nelson, Kootenay Landing, Kusknook, Kaslo, Arrowhead, Robson, Trail, Nakusp, New Denver, Roseberry, Procter, Okanagan Landing, Rossland, Slocan, Kimberly, Balfour, Harrop, Castlegar, Silverton, Shelter Bay, Galena Bay, Edgewood, Crawford Bay, Fort Steele, Beaton, Fernie, Grey Creek, Fraser Landing and Creston (although there may be others). For additional reference, this site provides a different perspective of the terrain and the lakes and river systems:

http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Hydro/en/map/region_two.php

2. Assign each student a community to research through the library or Internet access such as:

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0...>

<http://www.britishcolumbia.com/regions/towns>

<http://www.britishcolumbia.com/Maps>

Their focus is to determine the reasons or factors the community was established in that particular location and the year of establishment, to decide which factors continue to influence its existence today, to establish the action (whether human or otherwise) and the change brought about by this action, and ultimately, to assess the change/continuity in terms of progress or decline. (Worksheet provided)

3. During the next class, ask students to report their findings orally. Before they begin, have them place a labelled pushpin (or a typed name to be glued in place) on the wall map to demonstrate the location of that particular community.

4. As the reports are being presented, the teacher or an assigned recorder should make note of the water and rail connections between the communities. The connection of the communities should, in the end, be obvious and therefore enable the rail lines to be drawn on the map using coloured adhesive strips. Be sure students investigate all railways involved in the area, including the Grand Trunk, Intercolonial, Canadian Northern, Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific (CPR).

5. In the end, the wall map should be a vivid representation of the geography of the area with the Crowsnest Route, the Columbia River Route and the Kootenay Lake Route clearly identifiable.

6. In the individual reports, the students will have identified the role sternwheelers played in the communities' earlier development. To demonstrate the magnitude of the fleet that was operational over the years, it would be advisable for the student to provide (either by making a paper representation or obtaining a plastic model from the Dollar Store) a labelled model of the sternwheelers that serviced their community and place them on the map as well.

6. Using yarn, display the popular mode of travel that links the communities together (this could be assigned to two/three students).

Outcomes

Benchmarks of Historical Thinking - Identify Continuity and Change, and Cause and Consequence

Prescribed Learning Outcomes, British Columbia Ministry of Education:

Students will:

- Analyze the effect of commerce on trade routes, settlement patterns, and cultural exchanges.
- Describe how physical geography influenced patterns of settlement, trade, and exploration.
- Interpret graphs, tables, aerial photos, and various types of maps.
- Assess the role of geographical factors in the development of trade and settlement in Canada and other colonies.
- Locate and describe historical events on maps.
- Demonstrate effective research skills, including accessing information, assessing information, collecting data, evaluating data and organizing and presenting information.