

Lesson Plan: “Clang, Clang, Clang Went the Trolley...”*

*This lesson was developed by Maine Historical Society for the Seashore Trolley Museum as a companion curriculum for *Teddy Roosevelt, Millie, and the Elegant Ride* by Jean. M. Flahive (2019). The lesson corresponds with themes and topics covered in Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8, 17.*

Objectives:

- Students will practice the skills involved in researching and analyzing primary sources.
- Students will be able to identify different modes of transportation historically used in Maine and why the use of the trolley system was innovative and efficient.
- Students will be able to identify different types of trolley cars and how they were used historically in Maine.

Essential Questions:

1. How were trolley cars used for work and recreation in the late 1800s and early 1900s?

Materials:

- computers with internet access for teacher and student use – teachers and students will need to access Maine Memory Network (www.mainememory.net) to examine the documents used in this lesson and may want to access **Additional Recommended Resources** (see below)
- pen/pencil
- poster making supplies – paper, crayons/markers/colored pencils, scissors, glue/tape, etc.
- copies of **Trolley Car Note Catcher, Trolley Car Information Sheet, and Rubric** (below)
- copy (or copies) of *Teddy Roosevelt, Millie, and the Elegant Ride* by Jean Flahive – might be useful for students to have copies on hand, but not imperative for the completion of the activities in this lesson

Timeframe:

Will vary depending on length of class period, class size, etc.; 3-5 days/class periods recommended.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to brainstorm **all the different ways they can travel around Maine today**. Answers will vary but may include travel by: car, train, plane, bus, boat, walking, etc. Ask them to also consider, **How long does it take to get from one place in Maine to another?** For example, how long does it take to travel from Kittery to Fort Kent by car? How about from

Portland to Biddeford? How long does it take to get from their school to their home by bus or car?

2. Next ask students to brainstorm **all the different ways they can travel beyond Maine today**. Again, answers will vary but may include travel by: car, train, plane, bus, boat, etc. Ask them to again consider, ***How long does it takes to get from Maine to different places around the world today and what would be the best way to do it?*** For example, how long does it take to travel from Portland to Boston by car? How about from Bangor to Quebec? From the Portland Jetport to New York City by plane?

3. Ask students to now consider, ***What options did people have for traveling inside and outside of Maine 100 years ago?*** Answers will vary but may include travel by: train, boat, walking, horse/horse and carriage, etc. Ask students to **consider which of these methods we still use today, but how they might have changed**. For example, 100 years in the past trains and boats were powered by steam; is that still true today? Ask students to consider, ***How long might travel might have taken with some of these methods 100 years ago?*** After students have had a chance to consider and answer, explain that **travel 100 years ago was much slower than what we are used to today** (although travel times across the county by train and across the ocean by ship are about the same in the age of diesel and electricity as they were in the age of steam). For example, travel with a horse and carriage (the primary mode of short-distance travel in the U.S. between 1815-1915) over a distance of 50 miles (roughly the distance from Portland to Augusta) could take anywhere from 8-12 hours. Crossing the Atlantic Ocean under sail used to take anywhere from 2-3 months, and by steam (on the fastest ships) it could take around 4-5 days. Today a plane can fly across the Atlantic Ocean from New York to London in under 8 hours. Early steam powered trains could travel from New York City to San Francisco in 3.5 days; a direct flight on plane can make the same trip in just over 6 hours today.
 - a. Suggested images to help illustrate travel of 100 years ago from Maine Memory Network:
 - i. [D.W. Heseltine Apothecaries, Portland, ca. 1890](#)
 - ii. [Horse and wagon, Congress Street, Portland, ca. 1890](#)
 - iii. [Eastern Railroad, Locomotive #96, ca. 1890](#)
 - iv. [Passenger Steamer S.S. Portland, ca. 1895](#)

4. Explain that **travel by trolley car (or streetcar) was for many years in the U.S. the chief mode of public transportation in many cities and towns**. Trolley cars ran along tracks or rails along public streets. The wheels on the cars were made of steel and made in such a way that they would stay on the tracks. **The earliest cars were pulled by horses**; rails reduced friction on the cars, which meant horses could pull them more easily and the ride was smoother than a carriage. Cars powered by **electricity began replacing ones pulled by horses in the late 1800s**. Ask students, ***What might some of the advantages have been in having electric powered cars, versus cars pulled by horses?*** (didn't need to feed, house, and care for the horses; less animal waste on the streets; generally more efficient; lines could go further). Explain that trolley cars **first came to Maine in Portland in 1863** with the opening of the Portland Railroad Company. The first electric trolleys in Maine began service in Bangor in 1889. Electric trolleys connected Maine to New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and beyond.
 - a. Suggested images of trolley cars from Maine Memory Network:
 - i. [Horse-drawn trolley, Portland, ca. 1890](#)

- ii. [Trolley, Morning Street, Portland, c.a 1900](#)
- iii. [Boarding the trolley, Portland](#)

5. Explain to students that they are going to **work in small groups and look closely at some photographs and descriptions of trolleys in Maine from the late 1800s and early 1900s**. Their job will be **to teach their classmates about the type of trolley car they examined and studied as a group and how it would have been a useful tool for travel**. **Students will give short presentations in their groups (3-5 minutes) and can illustrate what they learned with Maine Memory Network albums, and/or by making large posters**. Explain that students should refer to the assignment **Rubric** (see below) for how their work will be assessed and to make sure they are including the necessary information for their presentation, whether they are making a poster or a slideshow. Instructions for how to create an album on Maine Memory Network can be found [here](#).
6. There are three main types of trolley car - **passenger, freight, utility** – and each group will focus 1 of the 3. If your class size is such that having only 3 groups would mean more than 6 students in each group, simply double up on assignments as needed (ex. 2 passenger groups, 1 freight group, 1 utility group).
7. Once group assignments are complete, **students can study their type of trolley using the slideshow [Field Guide to Trolley Cars](#) by Amber Tatnall on Maine Memory Networks**, as well as other images of trolley cars on the database. Students can access the slideshow directly from the website, or teachers can provide them with printed versions of the images. While the recommended slideshow is the best place to start with this project, students can also practice their research skills by exploring other related images of trolley cars on Maine Memory Network. Students can also use the slideshow tool on MMN to create their presentation.
8. To help students prepare their presentation, ask them to fill out the **Trolley Car Note Catcher** (see below). You may want to give students several copies of the note catcher to take notes as they prepare the presentation, and then ask for a final draft (1 copy from the whole group) to be turned in when the presentation is complete. On the note catcher, students can **record (1) the type of trolley cars they are looking at (ex. Parlor Car, Interurban, Mail, Locomotive, etc.), (2) notes on that particular type of car, and (3) the MMN item numbers of photos and other historical records that provide useful information on that type of car**. The recommended time for research and presentation prep is 2-3 class periods/days. Make sure that the time you give students includes some practice time for presentation. Presentations themselves will probably take up 1 class period/day depending on the number of groups in the class.
9. On presentation day, **each group will share with album and/or poster with the class**. While one group is presenting, the other students should each fill out their own **Trolley Car Information** sheet (see below). Make sure students understand that paying attention to each presentation and filling out that sheet will be part of the evaluation on the rubric for their work on the project.
10. **Conclusion/Exit ticket**: Ask students to **share one thing they learned about trolleys** from one of the group presentations.

Extension Activities:

- 1.) *The title of this lesson plan comes from the lyrics from “The Trolley Song” written by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane and made famous by Judy Garland in the 1944 film *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Show students the clip of Garland singing the song in the film and explain that while this is obviously a “glamorized” Hollywood take on trolley travel (and that the excitement that Garland’s character feels comes more from the prospect of romance than anything else), the song captures the what the excitement of a trolley ride might have been like for someone like Millie Thayer when it was still a new and innovative mode of transportation. Ask students to look at the trolley used in the film and compare it to photos of actual trolleys on Maine Memory Network. Is the Hollywood representation accurate?
- 2.) Use a variety of images from Maine Memory Network to create “Trolley Car Bingo” cards. Call out the names of different types of cars (ex. Parlor Car, Mail, Locomotive, etc.) and see who can get BINGO first correctly identifying each type of car.
- 3.) Consider a field trip to [Seashore Trolley Museum](#) to see historic trolley cars in person.

Additional Recommended Resources:

Seashore Trolley Museum:

[Educator Resources](#)

Maine Memory Network exhibits and slideshows:

[Trolley Parks of Maine](#)

[History in Motion: The Era of the Electric Railways](#)

[Trolley Travel](#)

film:

[Trolley excursion film, Lewiston-Auburn, ca. 1935](#)

Smithsonian:

[A Streetcar City](#)

Library of Congress:

[Harry Reece \(Daca\)...His Story](#)

Name(s): _____

TROLLEY CAR NOTE CATCHER

Type Of Trolley Car (circle one): PASSENGER FREIGHT UTILITY

List the different versions of this type of trolley car with a brief description of the work it was designed for and/or what made it unique.

TROLLEY CAR	DESCRIPTION	MMN ITEM #s

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Additional notes:

Name: _____

TROLLEY CAR INFORMATION SHEET

1.) **PASSENGER** trolley cars were mainly used for:

List 2 types of PASSENGER trolley cars:

The most interesting thing I learned about PASSENGER trolley cars is:

2.) **FREIGHT** trolley cars were mainly used for:

List 2 types of FREIGHT trolley cars:

The most interesting thing I learned about FREIGHT trolley cars is:

3.) **UTILITY** trolley cars were mainly used for:

List 2 types of **UTILITY** trolley cars:

The most interesting thing I learned about **UTILITY** trolley cars is:

“Clang, Clang, Clang, went the trolley...” Presentation Rubric

Standard	4 – exceeds standard	3 – standard met	2 – approaching standard	1 – does not yet meet standard
Research	Successfully used Maine Memory Network and other recommended sources to find accurate and appropriate information and navigates within the database easily without assistance.	Successfully used Maine Memory Network and other recommended sources as needed to find accurate and appropriate information.	Occasionally used Maine Memory Network to find information, or only occasionally used any of the recommend sources.	Only used Maine Memory Network with supervision or assistance, and/or did not utilize Maine Memory Network or any recommended sources to find information.
Content	Information is accurate and clearly relates to the main topic and includes many supporting details and/or examples.	Information is accurate and relates to the main topic, supported with at least 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information is mostly accurate and mostly relates to the main topic. Few details and/or examples are given.	Information is inaccurate and/or has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
Presentation Preparedness and Execution	Student is completely prepared for their role in the presentation, has obviously rehearsed, and is enthusiastic, attentive to, and supportive of the rest of the group.	Student is well prepared for their role in the presentation and provided sound support to rest of the group and their work.	Student is somewhat prepared but may have need more rehearsal and/or isn't working to support the rest of the group presentation.	Student does not seem prepared to present, nor is supporting the group presentation or work in any way.
Album/Poster	The album/poster is exceptionally attractive in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is easy to read/follow and informative.	The album/poster is attractive in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is easy to read/follow and informative.	The album/poster is acceptable but may need some improvement in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is mostly easy to read/follow and informative.	The album /poster needs significant improvement in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is difficult to read/follow and/or is not informative.
Peer Support/Listening to other Presentations	Listens intently, asks thoughtful questions, fills out worksheet thoroughly and completely. Does not make distracting noises or movements.	Listens intently, fills out worksheet completely. Does not make distracting noises or movements.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening but is not distracting, worksheet is only partly complete.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening and has distracting noises or movements, worksheet is incomplete or missing.
Sources/Bibliography	An accurate list is kept of all the sources used for the information and graphics in the presentation.	An accurate list is kept of almost all the sources used for the information and graphics in the presentation.	A partial list is kept of most the sources used for the information and graphics in the presentation.	List of all the sources used for the information and graphics in the presentation is missing or mostly incomplete.

total: _____

Maine Learning Results for Social Studies (2019):

Social Studies, Grades 6-8 – Geography: Students draw on concepts and processes from geography to understand issues involving people, places, and environments in the community, Maine, the United States, and the world.

- **Geography 1:** Students understand the geography of the community, Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world and the geographic influences on life in the past, present, and future by: **(D2)** Describing the impact of change on the physical and cultural environment.

Social Studies, Grades 6-8 – History: Students draw on concepts and processes using primary and secondary sources from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.

- **History 1:** Students understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world by: **(F1)** Explaining that history includes the study of past human experience based on available evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources; and explaining how history can help one better understand and make informed decisions about the present and future. **(F2)** Identifying major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world. **(D2)** Analyzing major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.

Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts Standards » History/Social Studies » Grade 6-8:

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.