

Lesson Plan: The Narcissus and the PLI

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 Chapter 7.

Objectives:

- Students will practice the skills involved in researching and analyzing primary sources.
- Students will be able to describe the history of the Portland-Lewiston Interurban and the Narcissus.

Essential Questions:

1. What set apart the Portland-Interurban Line from other trolley lines and trolley cars in Maine?

Materials:

- computers with internet access for teacher and student use – teachers and students will need to access Maine Memory Network (www.mainememory.net) and may want to access **Additional Recommended Resources** (see below)pen/pencil
- brochure/poster making supplies – paper, crayons/markers/colored pencils, scissors, glue/tape, etc.
- copies of **Chapter 7 Close: Reading Questions** and **Rubric** (below)
- copy (or copies) of *Teddy Roosevelt, Millie, and the Elegant Ride* by Jean Flahive

Timeframe:

Will vary depending on length of class period, class size, etc.; 2 days/class periods recommended.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to take a moment and ***think about a time and/or a place when they saw something that absolutely blew their mind and seemed too good to be true or even “magical”.*** ***What was it about the experience that made it seem so big or unreal? Does it still feel like a big or unreal experience today, or has it changed?*** Ask students to share their memory with a partner(s) and/or with the class. Explain that their experiences would have been comparable to the one Millie has when she visits and later rides the interurban trolleys for the first time.
2. This lesson is linked closely with **Chapter 7** and should be completed only after students have read that chapter. After students have completed the chapter, ask them to look back at it again and complete the **Chapter 7: Close Reading Questions** worksheet (see below). After students have had a chance to complete the questions on the worksheet, discuss their answers as a class.

3. Take a moment and **review what students have already learned about transportation and trolley cars** from the lesson "*Clang, clang, clang, went the trolley...*" (ie. why trolleys were superior in many way to travel by horse and carriage, how common they were in American cities at the turn of the century, what they looked like) and what they have learned about **the of life a girl like Millie would have had growing up on a Maine farm**.
4. Explain that the trolleys described in this chapter were those built for the Portland-Lewiston Interurban line (PLI) and were indeed just as they are described in the book. These particular trolleys, **built by the Laconia Company** in Laconia, NH, were much fancier than most. They were **designed to travel a high speed and outfitted with luxurious interiors** not typically seen in Maine cars. They had stained glass windows, gold leaf embellishments, main passenger compartments that could seat 44 passengers on plush Mohair reversible seats, and smoking compartments that could seat 8 passengers on leather seats. The materials on the inside of the cars included fancy woods such as mahogany, ebony, and holly, and the floors were covered with interlocking rubber tile. The cars were all **named after flowering plants. The PLI was considered the finest trolley line in the state.**
 - a. You can show students images and video of one of the cars, the *Narcissus*, here:
 - i. [The Narcissus](#)
 - ii. [stained glass windows](#)
 - b. You can show students other related images on Maine Memory Network here:
 - i. [Portland, Gray and Lewiston Electric Railroad Station, ca. 1910](#)
 - ii. [Libby-Dingley's Dam, ca. 1910](#)
 - iii. [Portland-Lewiston Interurban's car #14 "Narcissus", Gray, ca. 1930](#)
5. Explain that as more and more **people began to prefer cars in the 1920s and 1930s, use of the trolley system dwindled; the PLI ended service in 1933**, and the rails were removed in 1934. The cars were put up for sale and the body of the *Narcissus* was used for many years as a family's summer camp at Sabbatus Pond before being **purchased by the Seashore Trolley Museum in 1969 where it is being restored**.
6. Ask students to consider, ***What kind of possibilities did the interurban mean or represent for Millie? What do you think her brother Nathan meant when he said "You, my little sister, I expect to take flight on these trolleys." (p. 50)?***
7. Explain to students that using what they have learned about trolley travel, the images of the *Narcissus* and its restoration, images from Maine Memory Network, and descriptions from the book, they will **design advertisements posters or brochures for the PLI**. These advertisements should emphasize how luxurious, efficient, and exciting the PLI is, what it can do for passengers in Maine, and should make people want to ride the PLI. The advertisement should include both text and images. Instruct students to refer to the **Rubric** (see below) for how their work will be assessed.
8. **Conclusion/Exit ticket:** When brochures and posters are complete, ask students to **display their work in the classroom and to examine the work of their fellow students**. Ask students to describe **which poster or brochure they thought made the best case for riding the PLI and why**.

Extension Activities:

- 1.) Consider a field trip to Seashore Trolley Museum to see historic trolley cars, including the Narcissus in person.

Additional Recommended Resources:

Narcissus

[Narcissus 1912 Restoration Project](#)

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](#)

The Narcissus and the PLI Advertisement Rubric

Standard	4 – exceeds standard	3 – standard met	2 – approaching standard	1 – does not yet meet standard
Research	Successfully used Maine Memory Network, <i>TR</i> , <i>Millie...</i> text, and other recommended sources to find accurate and appropriate information and navigates within the database easily without assistance.	Successfully used Maine Memory Network, <i>TR</i> , <i>Millie...</i> text, and other recommended sources as needed to find accurate and appropriate information.	Occasionally used most of the appropriate resources to find information.	Did not utilize any appropriate 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.
Brochure/Poster Graphics & Images	Graphics /images go well with the text and there is an excellent mix of text and graphics. Excellent use of historical images as reference.	Graphics /images go well with the text and there is a good mix of text and graphics. Makes use of historical images as reference.	Some graphics /images go well with the text and but there may not be a good mix of text and graphics and/or little use of historical images as reference.	Graphics /images do not go with the text, poor mix of text and graphics and/or no use of historical images as reference.
Brochure/Poster Attractiveness and Text	The brochure/poster is exceptionally attractive in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is easy to read, informative, and persuasive.	The brochure/poster is attractive in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is easy to read and informative.	The brochure/poster is acceptable but may need some improvement in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is mostly easy to read and informative.	The brochure/poster needs significant improvement in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is difficult to read and/or is not informative.
Sources/Bibliography	An accurate list is kept of all the sources used for the information and graphics in the brochure/poster.	An accurate list is kept of almost all the sources used for the information and graphics in the brochure/poster.	A partial list is kept of most the sources used for the information and graphics in the brochure/poster.	List of all the sources used for the information and graphics in the brochure/poster 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.