



Discover Portage Road Lesson Plan

Freedom Crossing Monument

Subject Area: Social Studies

Language Arts

Grades: 4-8

English Language Arts Learning Standards

Standard 1

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and use knowledge generated from oral, written, and electronically produced texts. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.

Standard 2

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

Students will read and listen to oral, written and electronically produced texts and performances, relate texts and performances to their own lives, and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts and performances represent. As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language for self-expression and artistic creation.

Standard 3

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

As listeners and readers, students will analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented by others using a variety of established criteria. As speakers and writers, they will present, in oral and written language and from a variety of perspectives, their opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information and issues.

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New York State Social Studies Learning Standards

Standard 1

History of the United States and New York

Students will:

- Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York
- Distinguish between near and distant past and interpret simple timelines.
- Investigate key turning points in New York State and United States history and explain why these events or developments are significant.
- Gather and organize information about the important achievements and contributions of individuals and groups living in New York State and the United States,
- Prepare essays and oral reports about the important social, political, economic, scientific, technological, and cultural developments, issues, and events from New York State and United States history.

Located on the bank of the Niagara River in Lewiston, New York, Freedom Crossing Monument focuses on the courage of fugitive slaves who sought a new life of freedom in Canada. It also honors the local volunteers who protected and helped them on their journey across the Niagara River. Dedicated on October 14, 2009, it focuses on the historical importance of the Niagara River as a gateway to freedom on the Underground Railroad during the era before the Civil War. The first project to receive the endorsement of the Niagara River Greenway Commission, the concept of the monument was initiated in 2006 in 2006 by the Historical Association of Lewiston, Inc., the monument's sponsor..

Primary funding was provided by the Town of Lewiston with Niagara River Greenway Plan funds which were received from the New York Power Authority, and with supplemental private support from the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation and the KeyBank Foundation. No tax dollars were used. Total project cost was \$230,000. Project conception, planning and fund raising was done entirely by Historical Association of Lewiston, Inc. volunteers. Primary funding was provided by the Town of Lewiston with Niagara River Greenway Plan funds received from the New York Power Authority. supplemental private support from the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation and the KeyBank Foundation. No tax dollars were used to cover the total project cost of \$230,000.

Susan Geissler, a well-known sculptor, was commissioned by the Historical Association to design and produce the monument. Lee Simonson, the volunteer project director, collaborated with the concept designs, approvals and fundraising.

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The actual construction of the monument took was about nine months. cast in Loveland, Colorado, the monument pieces were transported to Lewiston by truck. The installation was accomplished in a 12 hour period on Monday, September 28, 2009, during the worst weather day of that month. The Village of Lewiston Public Works crew completed the work, along with volunteer architect John Giusiana, landscaper Jeff Thompson and bronze installer, Ed Darchuk.

The monument consists of five bronze sculptures that are 120% life-size. The subjects are a family of freedom seekers including a father, mother and baby; Lewiston's Underground Railroad Station Master, Josiah Tryon; and Laura Eastman, the fictional heroine from the Freedom Crossing, book by Margaret Goff Clark. . Although Laura Easton was a fictional character, many of the events in the book could have really happened. Margaret Goff Clark invented characters to help readers understand how the slaves were hidden, how slave catchers tried to catch them, and how local citizens, like Laura, helped the slaves escape to freedom across the river in Canada. Because the Underground Railroad relied on secrecy, there is little documentation about the people who helped transport fugitive slaves to Canada.

Josiah Tryon, however, was a real character, the secret volunteer "station master" for Lewiston's part in the Underground Railroad. Born in Weathersfield, Connecticut, he moved to Lewiston with his wife, Mary, in 1835. He was a tailor in Lewiston. With fellow citizens, Tryon hid and guided slaves to freedom in Canada. , Josiah and other citizens took hundreds, probably thousands, of slaves across the river to Canada in row boats in the middle of the night. A rowboat is also part of the monument.

The monument contains hidden messages and codes on each character .Two of the subjects are standing on rock depicting the bank of the Niagara River. The cane held by the fugitive father honors a legend that a cane made “of thornwood and entwined with tendrils” was given by an escapee in thanks to one of the local volunteers... Josiah Tryon (1798–1886), Lewiston's volunteer "station master" for the Underground Railroad, is handing the baby to the fugitive mother is. The GPS coordinates of Josiah Tryon's gravesite are inscribed on his bronze sculpture. The monument is the first large scale Underground Railroad monument in Western New York on the Canadian border, and the second in the United States.

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**Inscription
on the
plaque:**

FREEDOM
CROSSING
MONUMENT

A tribute
to the
enslaved
who sought
a new life of
freedom in
Canada, and
to
the local
volunteers
who helped
them on
their journey
to cross the
Niagara
River.

LEWISTON
, NEW
YORK



Freedom Crossing Monument, Lewiston, New York

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Crossing_Monument

Activity

Students will:

- Read *Freedom's Crossing* by Margaret Goff Clark,
- Access *Freedom Crossing by Margaret Goff Clark based in Lewiston, New York* at <http://historiclewiston.org/freedomcrossing.html> to compare events in the novel with actual persons, places and events in Lewiston, New York in the mid nineteenth century,
- Complete the activities described available at *Lesson Plan : Freedom Crossing Extension Activities* at <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/freedom-crossing-extension-activities>

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References

Clark, Margaret Goff. *Freedom Crossing*. Scholastic Paperbacks, 1991)

Freedom Crossing by Margaret Goff Clark based in Lewiston, New York at
<http://historiclewiston.org/freedomcrossing.html>

Freedom Crossing Monument at
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Crossing_Monument

Lesson Plan: Freedom Crossing Extension Activities at
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/freedom-crossing-extension-activities>