

The *Rouse Simmons*: the Christmas Tree Ship

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Grade 3; Language arts and social studies

Lesson overview: Students will use web sites, books, and songs to gather information about the *Rouse Simmons*, its role, and why it is still remembered.

Sources consulted:

Behrend, C (Performer). (1998). The christmas tree ship. On *Legends of the Great Lakes* [Medium of recording: CD] Old Country Records.

Hamilton, L. (2004). *Production of the Christmas Tree Ship play*. Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_mhc_christmastreeship_play_hamilton_85103_7.pdf

Longacre, G. (2006, Winter). *The Christmas Tree Ship*. Retrieved from <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/winter/christmas-tree.html>

Murdock, L, & Murdock, J. (2004). *Lake rhymes: folk songs of the great lakes*. Kanesville, IL: Depot Recording Publications.

Neuschel, F. (2007). *Lives and legends of the Christmas tree ships*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Pennington, R. (n.d.). *The Christmas Tree Ship*. Retrieved from <http://www.rochellepenningtonbooks.com/christmastreeship.html>

The tale of the Christmas Tree Ship. (2006, August 18). Retrieved from http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/highlights/archives/2006/08/the_tale_of_the.asp

United States Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes National Program Office. (1997). *Great minds? great lakes!* (905-R97-004). Chicago, IL: Environmental Protection Agency. Retrieved from <http://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPURL.cgi?Dockey=40001KS8.txt>

Winter, J. (1994). *The Christmas Tree Ship*. New York: Philomel Books.

Learning Objective:

Students will:

1. Identify reasons why the *Rouse Simmons* was carrying a cargo of Christmas trees.
2. Compare and contrast versions of its sinking from articles, stories, and songs.
3. Write a story or article based on what they learned.

State Benchmarks:

3 – E1.0.3 - Analyze how Michigan’s location and natural resources influenced its economic development (e.g., how waterways and other natural resources have influenced economic activities such as mining, lumbering, automobile manufacturing, and furniture making).

3 – E1.0.4 - Describe how entrepreneurs combine natural, human, and capital resources to produce goods and services in Michigan.

3 – H3.0.1 - Identify questions historians ask in examining the past in Michigan (e.g., What happened? When did it happen? Who was involved? How and why did it happen?)

3 – H3.0.2 - Explain how historians use primary and secondary sources to answer questions about the past.

R.CM.02.02 - retell in sequence the major idea(s) and relevant details of grade-level narrative and informational text.

R.CM.02.03 - compare and contrast relationships among characters, events, and key ideas within and across texts to create a deeper understanding by mapping story elements, graphically representing key ideas and details, and asking questions as they read

L.RP.02.03 - respond to multiple text types listened to or viewed knowledgeably, by discussing, illustrating, and/or writing in order to reflect, make connections, take a position, and/or show understanding.

W.GN.02.01 - write a narrative piece such as realistic fiction, fantasy, or personal narrative depicting major story events, using illustrations to match mood, and containing setting, problem/solution, and sequenced events.

W.GN.02.03 - write an informational piece including a magazine feature article using an organizational pattern such as description, enumeration, sequence, or compare/ contrast that may include graphs, diagrams, or charts to enhance the understanding of central and key ideas.

Materials needed:

Computer with Internet connection

Data projector

Smart Board

The Christmas Tree Ship book by Jeannette Winter

Legends of the Great Lakes CD by Carl Behrend or download of *Christmas Tree Ship* song

Lake Rhymes book by Lee and Joanne Murdock or recording of *The Christmas Tree Ship* song

Dive into Wisconsin's Past CD-ROM

Paper

Pencils/pens

New Vocabulary:

Schooner: type of sailing vessel

Lumber: trees that have been cut into boards. One of the major income sources in Michigan from 1840-1920.

Gale: a storm over the water with wind speeds of 34-40 knots and wave heights of 13-24 ft.

Primary source: a historical source from an eyewitness or first person account.

Secondary source: a historical source that had been retold

Focus question: How many of you have a Christmas tree during the holidays? Where are some places that you get your tree? If you lived in Chicago, you might get your Christmas tree from a ship. We're going to learn where that tradition started and why it still continues today.

Classroom activities:

1. Students will listen as I read *The Christmas Ship* by Jeannette Winter. After listening, they will retell important events from the story. We will listen to the audio recordings of songs retelling the same event. Students will again list important details, comparing and contrasting the retellings of the same event.
2. Using the Smart Board, we will view documents from the National Archives regarding the loss of the *Rouse Simmons* and underwater photographs taken by divers in Wisconsin's Maritime Preservation and Archaeology Department, ideally using their CD-ROM *Diving into Wisconsin's Past*. If that is not available, I will use images available on the Internet.

Introducing the idea of primary and secondary sources, students will again compare and contrast the information on the *Rouse Simmons*, making evaluations as to whether the source is primary or secondary.

3. Students will write either a short story or a magazine article incorporating information they have learned about the *Rouse Simmons*.

Assessment:

Students will write either a short story or a magazine article incorporating information they have learned about the *Rouse Simmons*.

You will write either a short story or a magazine article using what you have learned about the *Rouse Simmons*. You need to include what the ship usually carried, why it carried Christmas trees in November, what was different about it than the other ships that brought Christmas trees from Michigan to Chicago, what happened to the *Rouse Simmons*, and what happened afterwards.

If you write a short story, think about who is the narrator. Are you a child in Chicago waiting for a tree, like the narrator in the song? Are you telling the story from the point of view of the captain, his wife, his daughters, a sailor on the ship? Are you telling it from a third person point of view? How does the point of view change the story?

If you write a magazine article, make sure you tell us the facts of what happened. You can include maps showing where the ship sailed, its destination, and where it sank as well as other drawings or pictures. Make sure you answer all the questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Rubric Made Using:
RubiStar (<http://rubistar.4teachers.org>)

Story Writing : The Christmas Tree Ship

Teacher Name: **Ms. Thunell**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Requirements	All of the written requirements to include information about the Rouse Simmons were met.	Almost all (about 90%) the written requirements were met.	Most (about 75%) of the written requirements were met, but several were not.	Many requirements were not met.
Accuracy of Facts	All facts presented in the story are accurate.	Almost all facts presented in the story are accurate.	Most facts presented in the story are accurate (at least 70%).	There are several factual errors in the story.
Neatness	The final draft of the story is readable, clean, neat and attractive. It is free of erasures and crossed-out words. It looks like the author took great pride in it.	The final draft of the story is readable, neat and attractive. It may have one or two erasures, but they are not distracting. It looks like the author took some pride in it.	The final draft of the story is readable and some of the pages are attractive. It looks like parts of it might have been done in a hurry.	The final draft is not neat or attractive. It looks like the student just wanted to get it done and didn't care what it looked like.

Date Created: **July 13, 2011**