A HISTORICAL LOOK AT LIFESAVING AS A CAREER
Submitted by: Jody Lehman, School Counselor

Lesson Overview:
Students will explore the historical lifesaving career based on the legendary heroes of the Great Lakes who were employees of the original U.S. Life-Saving Service. Students watch a powerpoint presentation about the US Lifesaving Service on the Great Lakes, read two stories about the historical career of lifesaving from the book Wreck Ashore by Frederick Stonehouse, and complete a student page and learning assessment.

Subject/Grade: 8th grade careers curriculum (may be modified for other grades); Grades 7-9 Social Studies

Duration: Three to four 45-minute class periods.

Materials Needed
Per class
Power Point: A Historical Career in Lifesaving; Heroes of the Great Lakes (online at: wupcenter.mtu.edu)
Per student
Wreck Ashore by Frederick Stonehouse (used with permission) excerpts “The Poor Boys are all Gone” and “Where’s the Woman?”
Tools of the Trade student page

Learning Objectives
After this lesson the student will be able to:
1. Describe the Great Lakes as a natural resource.
2. Describe the importance of shipping to our economy.
3. Describe the historical origin of a maritime career in lifesaving and its’ importance to shipping and local residents.
4. Identify the major tools and lifesaving devices of the Life Saving Career and how they were used.
5. Explain the Breeches Buoy and its effectiveness to lifesaving.
6. Discuss reasons why people in the Life-Saving Service were considered heroic.
7. Identify which career clusters this occupation would fit in using the Wisconsin Career Clusters (or other state).
8. Identify current lifesaving careers and how they might differ from a “Storm Warrior.”
Wisconsin Standards and Benchmarks (Comprehensive Model of Counseling).

I.8.2.3 Demonstrate the use of information (e.g., about oneself; local, national, and global economic trends; and educational options) to consider in career decisions.

I.8.2.4 Show how beliefs, culture, work values, personal priorities, and knowledge of the broad range of career opportunities will influence career decisions.

I.8.3.1 Demonstrate openness to exploring and considering a wide range of occupations and career paths, including those that may be considered new or nontraditional for individuals based on gender, race, culture, ability, or other characteristics.

Procedure

1. Show the PowerPoint, *A Historical Career in Lifesaving* to facilitate discussion using the photos, narrative and notes.
2. Read aloud the stories from the book “Wreck Ashore” or have students take turns reading in small groups. Due to the length of the stories, you may want to shorten to several exciting excerpts by reviewing the stories before the lesson.
3. Have the students complete the Tools of the Trade worksheet and go over the correct answers as a group.
4. If time permits, show the DVD *Storm Warriors* which provides a historical look at the evolution of the “Storm Warrior” “job” to today’s current life-saving professions.

Learning Assessment

1. Why are the Great Lakes such a valuable resource to the United States?
   *The great Lakes are used to ship many products to and from the United States*

2. Name 3 things that we use that rely on Great Lakes shipping to move the raw materials/natural resource.
   - Cars (Iron ore)
   - Limestone (building materials)
   - Road salt (for icy roads)
   - Sand and gravel (road construction)
3. A Storm Warrior is someone who did what?
*Rescued people from shipwrecks*

4. What was the purpose of a Breeches Buoy?
*To transport people from a shipwreck to the shore.*

5. Why were “Storm Warriors” considered heroic?
*They risked their lives to save people. They would go out in any kind of weather. Many would die trying to save people*

6. List 3 lifesaving careers that you know of in today’s world.
*Emergency medical technicians, Police, Firefighters*

**Tools of the Trade** student page (correct responses):
1K, 2L, 3H, 4A, 5J, 6I, 7F, 8E, 9C, 10D, 11G, 12M, 13B

**References**
*Stonehouse, Frederick. Wreck Ashore. Duluth: Lake Superior Port Cities, 1994.*
- *The Poor Boys are all Gone,* Chapter 14, Pg. 159.
- *Where’s the Woman?* Chapter 16, Pg. 164.

[www.seiche-entertainment.com](http://www.seiche-entertainment.com)
TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Match the U.S. lifesaving “tools of the trade” in the left column with the descriptions in the right column.

- Manby Mortar
- Lyle Gun
- Lighthouse
- Faking Box
- Beach Lantern
- Surfboat
- Life Jacket
- Service Station
- Breeches Buoy
- Francis Life Car
- Beach Cart
- Hawser Cutter
- Library Box

A. A strategic way for rope to be stored so it could be shot without getting tangled.
B. This was exchanged between crews to keep men occupied between calls.
C. A rescue system that involved a device that looked like pants on a string.
D. Riding in this proved to be very terrifying with its close quarters and no ventilation.
E. A building that was comprised of a crew quarter, tower and boat house located on the shore.
F. These were made out of fabric and cork.
G. This had two wheels and was exhausting to pull.
H. A guide to ships to help them navigate away from dangerous shores.
I. A floatation device designed to quickly empty sea water and be steered to a wreck by a crew.
J. A portable beacon to help with night patrols.
K. A very heavy way of shooting the shot line.
L. A much lighter way of shooting the shot line.
M. A device that was used to cut and save the shot line after it was done being used.
Discuss the Pros and Cons of the Great Lakes “Surfman” Lifesaving Career:

Pros
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
Cons
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Using the WisCareers site: wiscareers.wisc.edu —Explore the following careers and record the requested information.

Career:                      Emergency Medical Technician
Job outlook              ______________________________________
Educational Path    ______________________________________
Salary     (90%)         ______________________________________

Career:                      Marine Engineer
Job duties
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
Salary (90%)                               ____________________________________
A school closest to you that offers training _________________________________________________

Career:                    Fire Fighter
Job duties
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
Educational Path ______________________________________________________________________
A school closest to you that offers training _________________________________________________