

CRANBERRY HARVESTING

Historical Literacy Guide: *History*



Wisconsin Historical
MUSEUM

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Object Literacy: *Learning from Objects*

The Wisconsin Historical Museum, as part of the Wisconsin Historical Society, has developed the following guide to assist in the teaching of standards for social studies. By focusing on objects, artifacts, maps, photographs and other primary sources from its collection, students will be able to redefine how they learn from objects and from history.

Object-based learning is

- Using a variety of objects as central to the development of lesson concepts
- Utilizing objects through posing and investigating questions
- Utilizing well-thought-out initial questions to stimulate further critical thinking
- Using students' natural interest and inclination for question-posing to guide instruction in all subjects
- Leading students to their own answers by responding to open ended questions and/or returning the students' focus to the object
- Student-directed learning following paths created by the students

Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction and Common Core State Standards Initiative

Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction by Nikki Mandell and Bobbie Malone is a teaching and learning framework that explains the essential elements of history and provides “how-to” examples for building historical literacy in classrooms at all grade levels. With practical examples, engaging and effective lessons and classroom activities that tie to essential questions, *Thinking Like a Historian* provides a framework to enhance and improve teaching and learning history.

Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction

(TLH) **inquiry-based educational theory** provides a common language for educators and students. The theory allows for the educational process to be combined with categories of inquiry which promote historical literacy.

It is the intent of the Wisconsin Historical Museum that this guide serves educators and students in providing object-based lessons to be used after visiting and experiencing the museum on a field trip. Our field trips support *Common Core English Language Arts Standards* for Reading: Informational Text and Speaking & Listening standards as well as CCSS for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies.

Educators should use this guide as a post-museum visit activity. It will continue to challenge students to “Think Like a Historian” by encouraging them to think critically, make personal connections with history, and to evaluate information by asking “why”, “how”, and most importantly, “How do you know?”

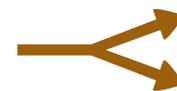
TLH CATEGORIES



CAUSE AND EFFECT



CHANGE AND CONTINUITY



TURNING POINTS



USING THE PAST



THROUGH THEIR EYES

Background Information

The cranberry, Wisconsin's official state fruit, grows on vines in peat or sandy marshes. Originally called "crane berries" because the cranberry plant's stem and blossoms resembled the neck, head, and beak of a crane, cranberries are one of only a few commercially-available fruits native to North America. Some Native Americans believed that the tart berry had special powers to calm the nerves, and the fruit was a staple in their diets. Native Americans ate cranberries fresh and created cranberry poultices used to treat wounds. They also used cranberries in making pemmican, a mixture of dried meat and fruit pounded to a powder and mixed with melted fat.

Once introduced to the cranberry, Europeans also grew to appreciate the fruit. Early French voyageurs who explored Wisconsin's waterways often bartered for cranberries with Native Americans. Sailors began to take barrels of cranberries to sea with them to provide vitamin C for the prevention of scurvy. Wild cranberries were considered such a valuable commodity, in fact, that an old Wisconsin law doled out a penalty of \$50 for the offense of picking or having in one's possession unripe cranberries before the 20th of September.

In the early days of cranberry harvesting, the berries were picked from the vines by hand, a time-consuming and expensive task. In 1872, one Berlin, WI cranberry marsh alone employed 1,500 pickers at a cost of \$52,000. That same year an engineer by the name of W.T. Cosgrain suggested a new method: flood the cranberry marshes until the berries floated on top of the water, and then use rakes to remove the fruit from the vines. In "raking the flood" the cranberry hand rake is swung in a back-and-forth motion, the teeth of the rake combing the cranberries from the vines. Using this new method, each worker harvested 15-20 barrels a day instead of the usual eight or ten.

The early models of harvesting rakes were patterned after small scoops used by growers in the eastern United States. The first cranberry hand rakes were constructed entirely of wood. Later, to make the rakes more durable, the teeth were covered with metal. Through the years additional minor modifications in structure and design were made, until the use of hand rakes began to decline in the 1950s in favor of even more-efficient harvesting techniques.

Flooding marshes to harvest cranberries is still in common practice today. While cranberries can be either dry- or wet-harvested, the most prevalent method is the water harvest. To harvest in this “wet” manner, the growing beds are flooded and a “water reel” agitates the water, dislodging the fruit from the vine. The floating fruit is then corralled and loaded onto trucks for delivery to a receiving station. Wet-harvested fruit is used for processed cranberry products like juice and sauce. It takes about 4,500 cranberries to produce just one gallon of cranberry juice.

Dry harvesting uses mechanical harvesters which were developed by Wisconsin growers, with teeth that lift the berries from the vines. The berries are then loaded into bins and shipped to receiving stations to be cleaned and packaged as fresh fruit.

Cranberries are still big business in Wisconsin, with about 150 cranberry marshes occupying a total of 110,000 acres in eighteen counties. Wisconsin marshes produce more than half of the cranberries consumed by Americans each year, making Wisconsin the top cranberry producing state for many years running. Cranberry festivals, which often include tours of harvesting operations, are held across Wisconsin each fall.

Images for the Classroom



Cranberry Harvesting Rake (WHi Museum Object: 1973.121)

Images for the Classroom

WANTED! WANTED!

200 Cranberry Pickers. **200**
75cts. per bushel, 75cts.

25 MEN to work by the day.—Besides 35 first class Rakers,
For whom we are building a Hall for their special purpose,
At HITCHCOCK on SEPTEMBER 1st, 1884.
We will pay as much as others do for the same kind of work. We will try to make our patrons as comfortable as we can

A special train will leave Tomah on Sept. 1st at 10 a. m.,
for Hitchcock.—Fare Reduced to 40cts.

Free Ball in the evening.—Day laborers had better bring
blankets.—Boarding house accommodations for all who may
desire board.

Respectfully,
Wisconsin Cranberry Co.

Cranberry Pickers Wanted, 1884 (WHi Image ID: 45749)

Images for the Classroom



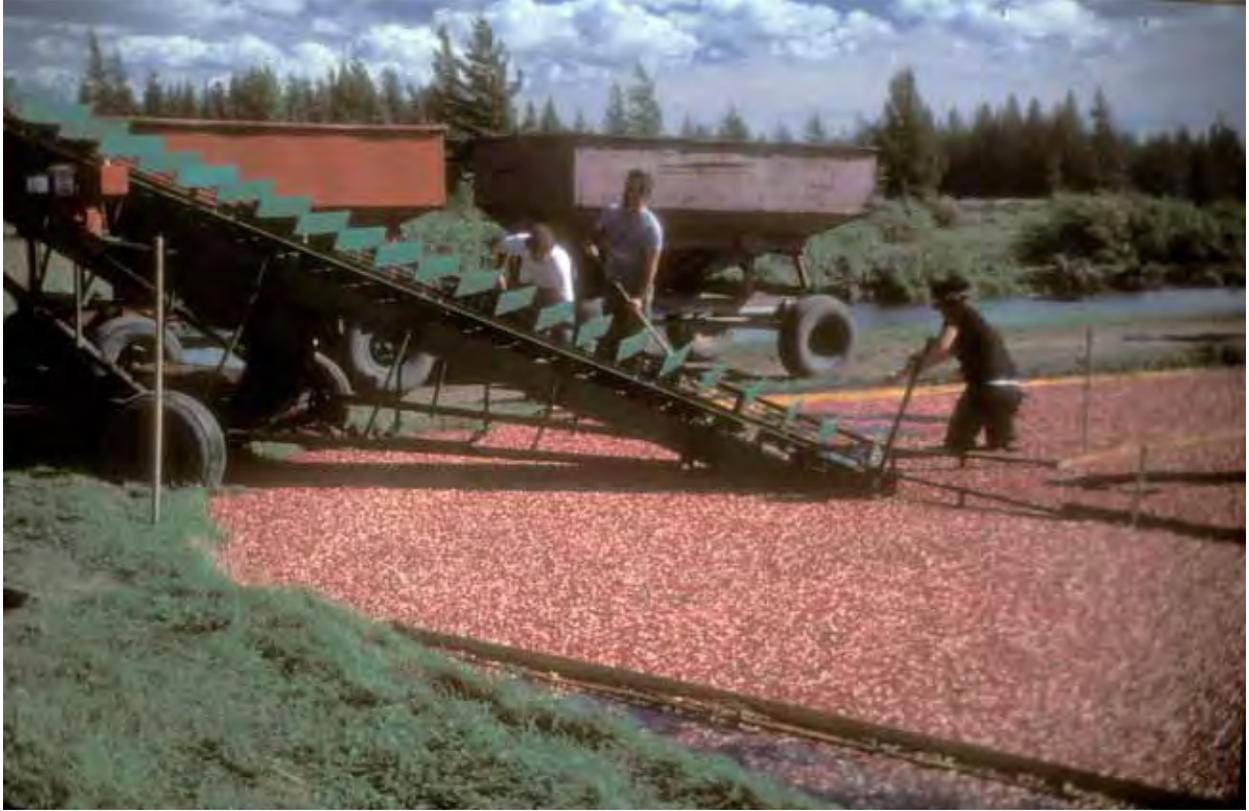
Harvesting Cranberries, 1895 (WHi Image ID: 24507)

Images for the Classroom



Harvesting Cranberries (WHi Image ID: 1950)

Images for the Classroom



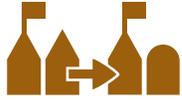
Cranberry Harvest, 1984 (WHi Image ID: 43240)

Student Activity

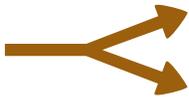
Project for students **Cranberry Harvesting Rake** (WHi Museum Object: 1973.121). Ask students to review the image, brainstorm, and write down on a piece of paper what they are looking at.

Then give small groups of students packets of additional images and ask them to discuss. Give students plenty of time to consider the image and articles before introducing the discussion questions.

Teacher-led Student Inquiry and Analysis Questions



1. From looking at the artifact and the images, how do you think cranberry harvesting has changed? Who benefited most from the new methods of harvesting? Who might have been hurt by these changes?



2. How did the jobs of cranberry pickers change with the new technologies?



3. Compare the images of cranberry harvests. With which do you think the cranberry rake goes? List the reasons for your choice and be prepared to defend that choice!

Bibliography and Additional Resources

Images and objects shared in this document can be found on the following Wisconsin Historical Society webpages:

Wisconsin Historical Images www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/

Curators' Favorites www.wisconsinhistory.org/museum/artifacts/

Additional information can be found at:

Wisconsin Cranberry Discovery Center

www.discovercranberries.com

Wisconsin Magazine of History Archives

<http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/u?/wmh,14922>

Reflection

The Wisconsin Historical Museum is interested in hearing memories of favorite experiences or exhibits. Have students use the next page to illustrate and describe what they enjoyed most. Please return to:

Museum Education

Wisconsin Historical Museum

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Madison, WI 53703

