

I've Felt the Same Way

Chicago River Classroom Activity

Summary

Students will hear stories from people living in four different historical time periods. Students will then match the stories to their related photo and write or draw about a time when they felt a similar way.

Procedure

- ◆ Show the attached historic pictures to the students.
- ◆ Read the stories.
- ◆ Have the students match the story to the picture.
- ◆ Have the students pick the story that most interests them and either write a story or draw a picture (depending on grade level) about a time when they felt like the person in the story.

Grade Level: K-4th

Duration: 30-40 minutes

Objectives:

1. Students will understand various differences between their lives and the lives of people living in the 19th century Chicago area.

Materials:

None other than materials included in lesson

Standards:

1.C.1b, 1.C.2b, 2.B.1a, 2.B.2a, 3.A.1, 3.A.2, 3.C.1a, 3.C.2a, 16.A.1b, 16.A.2b, 16.A.1c

I've Felt The Same Way: Stories

Story 1 (Native American)

It seems to be getting colder; I think that autumn is coming soon. I may have to start wearing my buffalo robe because it keeps me nice and warm. I am so content. I love the time of year with all of the beautiful leaves turning colors of bright orange, yellow and red. It's also time for the harvest: when all of the women and children in the village pick the rest of our corn and vegetables and get it ready to store for the winter.

All of the men who are in good health go off and hunt so that we have plenty of meat for the winter. They are warriors and not only hunt for the village, but protect us as well. One day I hope to be a warrior, but I am still too small. I can't yet climb onto a horse. We have some big feasts to celebrate all of the wonderful things that the earth has given us during the harvest. We eat a lot and dance and sing. It's a lot of fun!

Our village is next to the river Checaugua. The river gives us much: like water to drink, fish to eat, a place to take a bath and wash our clothes. We are very grateful to have it! We are very grateful for our home, full of grasses and flowers, forests and ponds. We have everything we need! Plants to eat, animals, such as deer, buffalo, wolves, turkeys and more, that give us food and fur or feathers for our clothes. It is a fine place to live!

Story 2 (I & M Canal Worker)

I am so very tired. I have been digging and digging all day long. From early in the morning till the late evening. I can barely eat the soup that my wife has cooked me for dinner because I am afraid I might fall asleep!

Why am I digging? What am I digging? I am helping to dig a new piece of the Chicago River! A piece that will connect the river flowing out of the great big city of Chicago to another river far away called the Illinois River. This new river that connects the Chicago River to the big Illinois River is called a canal. It will let boats move their goods from the Atlantic Ocean all the way to the Gulf of Mexico! It's a very important thing we are doing. It means that grain, lumber and stone can be transported from the Midwest to the East Coast. But that doesn't mean I am not tired!

We have to dig so much that I can barely move after we are done. My arm muscles hurt. Sometimes, on Sundays when I don't have to work, I still have to dig a hole in my backyard so that my arm muscles won't cramp up and hurt even worse. At least I am making money and able to give my wife a home. It's not a big home, just a little shack in a little town next to the canal we're building, but it's our own house!

We came to Chicago from far away, from Ireland, because we heard that there would be a job working on the canal here for anyone who could dig. There were no jobs in Ireland and lots of people were starving, so we decided to come here. So now I dig, all of the time, and I am tired all of the time. I need to go bed, right after my soup. I hope I don't fall asleep while eating.

Story 3 (Christmas Tree Ship Pilot)

I just can't wait to reach Chicago! I am almost there. I can see the people waiting on the dock for us. Waving and smiling as our boat moves across Lake Michigan. The children are all jumping up and down! Why? Because it soon will be Christmas and I am bringing the people of Chicago their Christmas trees! We do this each year. My father and I live in Wisconsin and we load up the ship with Christmas trees and sail through Lake Michigan down from Wisconsin to Chicago, Illinois. They call us the Christmas Tree Ship. They've even written songs about us and our coming to the city every Christmas time.

Story 3 (Man on Bubbly Creek)

I am ill and disgusted! How can people have let the Chicago River get this way? It is full of toilet waste, garbage and chemicals too! If someone's horse dies, they just throw it in the river! When we go to the bathroom, our toilet waste goes underground and into the river. Why did the people in charge design it that way?

Do you believe that I can stand on the water? It's not magic, it's just that there is so much toilet waste in the water that it has made a crust on top and I can stand on it. It smells awful too, just like a bathroom smells after someone has used it. The whole river smells like that. Because the river goes through the city of Chicago, the whole city smells like a toilet! People have to hold their noses or else they feel sick from the smell! It's gross and I don't like living here anymore. The place makes me sick!

Story 4 (Friends Volunteer 1979)

I am very ready to help change things! The poor Chicago River has been polluted for many years. People have dumped all kinds of stuff in it. I once even found a car under the water. It's so dirty, that very few fish can live in it. And then there is that terrible newspaper article that I read this morning. The article actually said that the Chicago River has no Friends. Well what am I then? I love the river and think that we can make it healthy again through some work. I know other people that I would want to help too. We could bring fish back to the river, animals back to the riverbanks, make the water safe again and teach people about this special river!

I've Felt The Same Way: Photos





Courtesy of Library of Congress American Memory



Courtesy of Library of Congress Living Memory

