

## **AS TIME PASSES OVER THE LAND: WHITE MOUNTAIN ART**

### **An Integrated Elementary School Visual Arts Activity**

#### **Introduction: The White Mountain Painters**

The White Mountains have been a center of tourism, industry and artistic inspiration for decades. The earliest explorers and settlers of the region related its beauty to those who had never experienced it, one of the earliest explorers, Philip Carrigain, called the White Mountains the “Switzerland of America”. The landscape experienced by the early explorers and farmers would not stay the same and eventually change due to the impact of the groups that came to the area to take advantage of its resources.

The land of the New Hampshire valleys and mountains were greatly transformed during the early nineteenth century by farmers and loggers. Farmers cleared wooded areas for farming and loggers cleared timber for industry further south. As the nineteenth century progressed, more roads and rail lines were built that brought more industry, travelers and tourists into the region. The transformation of the landscape opened vistas and scenery that was attractive to tourists. The increased interest brought with it larger and more developed hotels for travelers and tourists and the protection of wooded areas by individual landowners who wanted to develop trails and wooded areas to accompany their hotels.

Despite the interest and travel to the area, it was a disaster that brought the first artists to the region. The Wiley family was wiped out by a rockslide in August 1826 that left their house standing. It was this disaster that brought artists Thomas Cole and Henry Cheever Pratt to the region. Cole’s artwork showed other artists the beauty and potential of the landscape of the White Mountains. More artists soon followed Cole and Pratt. Among the artists and tourists traveling to the region were many prominent transcendentalists such as Henry David Thoreau and well know authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson.

With the increased development of the area the landscape became less rugged and wild. The White Mountain painters moved away from depicting the wild and undeveloped landscape seen early in the century. In addition, they did not paint the devastated landscape left by unregulated logging. The painters edited the compositions they created by excluding manmade structures or the effects of industry they did not want to depict. The landscape they were painting became a romantic, peaceful countryside. People, light and atmosphere became more important in their paintings. More and more the artists were making their paintings for sale to the tourists. The depictions of the White Mountains’ landscapes, small towns and villages, and people helped the preservation movements that sought to save the White Mountains and its forests. The paintings showed Americans the importance and beauty of the region whether the artwork was truly accurate or not.

The activities and essential questions of this curriculum have been designed to meet a range of ages and abilities. They are foundations that may be modified and changed to meet the needs of educators in their classroom and community.

## **IMPORTANT PLACES: TELLING THE PERSONAL STORY OF THE BEAUTY OF PLACE**

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

- How did the White Mountains change because of logging, farming and tourism?
- Why were tourists attracted to the White Mountains?
- What attracted artists to the White Mountains?
- What role did the artwork of the White Mountains painters play in preserving and attracting tourists to the White Mountains?

**MATERIALS** (*materials and resources may be modified to meet the needs of students and teachers*)

Paper  
Tempera Paint  
Tape  
Pencils  
Paint Brushes  
Paint Trays  
Water Containers

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The students will be able to:

- Investigate, identify and discuss the importance of natural areas to industry, communities and self.
- Investigate and analyze the aesthetic and compositional choices that the White Mountain painters made to depict the landscape and understand how these choices affected people's views and expectations of the White Mountains.
- Explore and identify the qualities of a personally important place and express and understand the role those qualities play in how they value that place.
- Explore and investigate the aesthetic qualities and emotional meaning of a personally important place and visually express their feeling of the beauty of that place.

## **DESCRIPTION OF LESSON**

This lesson is an exploration and discussion of the natural and aesthetic qualities of the landscape of the White Mountains. It uses the beauty and qualities of the landscape that attracted and inspired the White Mountain painters as a catalyst for the exploration and investigation of areas that students may view as special, inspiring and attractive to them. The lesson will make connections between subject matter of the White Mountain paintings, and the landscape qualities and resources that attracted tourists, settlers and industry. Students will look at, investigate and discuss these qualities and the impact that each group has had on the landscape and the effect the White Mountain painters have had on outside perceptions of the White Mountains and their importance. Through these explorations, investigations and discussions, students will make connections to their community and have opportunities to visually express the importance and beauty of an area or location they feel is special and beautiful to them.

## **ANTICIPATED LENGTH OF THE LESSON**

*\* Class time may vary from school to school. The sequence may be modified to fit to a school's instructional schedule.*

30 to 40 minutes each class

3 to 4 class days in length

## **SEQUENCE OF DAILY LESSONS**

The following is an outline of the possible sequence of procedure for the activity. This is a foundation that may be modified as needed by the instructor.

Day 1: The teacher will introduce the history and tradition of the White Mountain painters and the White Mountain region. The class will explore and investigate the impact settlers, farmers, tourists, artists and industry have had on the White Mountain region. They will look at ways the landscape has been altered in terms of physicality and perceived importance for industry, tourism and conservation. The class will focus on, investigate and discuss the qualities of the landscape that attracted and inspired the White Mountain artists while viewing and discussing artwork by White Mountain painters. They will investigate and discuss the ways the White Mountain painters depicted the beauty and qualities of the landscape. The students will make connections to, discuss and identify areas in their community they feel are inspirational and beautiful. Each student will identify and choose one location that is special and beautiful to him/her and express this visually in a painting. The painting will express the aesthetic qualities and details that he/she finds inspirational, beautiful and interesting.

Day 2: The teacher will refocus the students on the history of the White Mountains, the White Mountain painters and the special places the students have chosen to paint and the qualities of the landscape and environment they are going to depict and why. Students will plan and work on their paintings.

Day 3: The teacher will refocus the students on the topic of the lesson and the activity. The students will work independently on their artwork. Students will be nearing completion of their artwork.

Day 4: The teacher will refocus the students on the topic of the lesson and the activity. The class will complete their paintings and choose an area in their school to display them to be seen by teachers and students. As a group, they will discuss the completed paintings, outcomes, aesthetic qualities and each painting's representation of the feelings of the importance and beauty of the special place they chose.

*\* Modifications: The teacher can predetermine areas in their community to be explored and discussed as subject matter for the artwork and determine whether a mural or individual artwork is made.*

## **ART HISTORY COMPONENT**

Teacher selected images from *As Time Passes Over the Land: White Mountain Art*.

*\* Additional materials and resources may be researched and added by the teacher.*

## **ASSESSMENT PLAN**

Teachers may assess students formally and informally and design those assessment strategies using this lesson as a foundation and additionally tailoring them to their needs based upon their classroom profiles.

## **VOCABULARY**

White Mountains  
Tourist  
Logging  
Landscape  
Beauty  
Industry  
Composition

## **STANDARDS**

### **Visual Arts Standards**

Standard 1. Apply appropriate media, techniques, and processes

Standard 2. Identify and apply the elements of visual art and principles of design

Standard 3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

Standard 4. Understanding the arts in relation to history and culture

Standard 6. Making connections between the visual arts, other disciplines and daily life

### **New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks**

- SS - 3.10.6.8 - Employ photographs to classify areas as rural, suburban, and urban, and to identify similarities and differences in land use in those areas.
- SS - 3.11.6.2 - Identify and discuss the human geographic features of neighborhoods and places including population density, economic activities, forms of shelter, and modes of transportation and communication.
- SS - 3.11.6.4 - Discuss the attachments people have for a particular place and region as well as their sense of belonging in certain places and regions.
- SS - 3.13.10.4 - Evaluate, take, and defend positions concerning the ways changing population patterns can influence the environment and society.
- SS - 3.14.6.1 - Identify and discuss ways people depend upon, use, and alter the physical environment.
- SS - 3.15.10.1 - Evaluate sites within their community or region in order to identify the best location for a particular activity (for example, school, factory, shopping area, waste treatment plant).
- SS - 3.15.10.4 - Use the concept of sustainable development to analyze how different countries respond to changes in population and the needs of society.
- SS - 4.16.6.6 - Demonstrate an understanding that people, artifacts, and documents represent links to the past and that they are sources of data from which historical accounts are constructed.
- SS - 4.16.6.10 - Discuss the importance of individuals and groups that have made a difference in history, and the significance of character and actions for both good and ill.
- SS - 4.16.10.4 - Examine historical materials relating to a particular region, society, or theme; analyze change over time; and make logical inferences concerning cause and effect.

- SS - 4.16.10.6 - Develop and implement research strategies in order to investigate a given historical topic.
- SS - 4.16.10.11 - Utilize knowledge of the past and the processes of historical analysis to carry out historical research; make comparisons; develop and defend generalizations; draw and support conclusions; construct historical explanations, narratives, and accounts; solve problems; and make informed decisions.
- SC - 4.3.10.1 - Investigate how human activities, such as reducing the amount of forest cover and increasing the amount and variety of chemicals released into the atmosphere have changed the Earth's land, ocean, and atmosphere.
- SC - 4.3.10.3 - Describe possible consequences of reducing or eliminating some of the Earth's natural resources.