

Dear Educators,

Welcome to another edition of K-12 STUDY CANADA focusing on utilizing symbols to teach about Canadian history and the Canada-U.S. relationship. Once again, we have had an active few months reaching educators both regionally and nationally through our workshops and presentations.

In January Nadine had the pleasure of traveling to St. Paul to participate in a two-day workshop for Minnesota teachers. We spent two hours going over the symbols of Canada including comparing the two national animals – the eagle and the beaver (excerpts from this presentation are included in the article below). Thanks to the efforts of the Minnesota Humanities Center and the Canadian Consulate, Minneapolis, thirty educators from the region benefited from two days of presentations based on the theme, *“The Geography of the Neighbourhood: Canada and the U.S.”*

In the last few months our centers also have hosted a small “army” of “ambassadors” who are successfully bringing Canada into the classrooms in our region. In the last couple of months Tim Pasch, U.W. doctoral candidate in

Communication, has presented on Canada’s Arctic at Kentridge High School and on the use of the internet by Canada’s Inuit at the annual Lake Chelan retreat; U.W.’s Martha Dietz, Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations, College of Arts and Sciences, provided an overview of aboriginal literature in Canada at the annual Washington State Council for Social Studies K-8 in-service; Cody Case, master’s student, Ethnomusicology, had over 200 high school students attend his lecture on hip-hop music and cultural identity in Québec at the annual U.W. World Languages Day; and Nadine presented on the Inuit inuksuk and the 2010 Olympic logo at the Jackson School annual Mosaic workshop. At WWU, the Center for Canadian-American Studies and student-led Canada Club joined forces to host a performance by Montréal Danse, a concert by Canadian twins Tegan and Sara, and a series of Canadian lectures, films, food and games as they celebrated Canada Week on campus.

Tina and Betsy Arntzen (U Maine) have been busy coordinating a high profile outreach campaign to showcase Canada at the 2008 NCSS Annual conference in Houston next November. Look for articles on Canada in upcoming

issues of Social Education and promos that indicate “Canada is Coming to NCSS!,” an effort that will bring a group of outstanding Canadian teachers to the conference as part of NCSS’ International Visitors Program and will offer an impressive strand of sessions about Canada. Of course, we hope to meet some of you before then at the 30th Annual STUDY CANADA Summer Institute in Vancouver and Whistler, BC, June 22-27. And, no, it’s not too late to register! (Visit www.k12studycanada.org/scsi.asp) Several Consulates of Canada in the US are able to offer travel support to teachers in their region so contact tina.storer@wwu.edu if you’d like to take advantage of this offer.

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Using Canadian Symbols to Teach about History and Culture – the Beaver!

—by Nadine Fabbi

National symbols – national animals, anthems, flags, coinage, etc. – are an excellent way to introduce students to other nations and cultures. Every symbol is “loaded” with history, social values, and unique celebrations of culture. And, given that young people seem to have an affinity for animals, learning about Canada by studying its national animal – the beaver – is a great way to introduce the country to your students.

Begin by having your students discuss the attributes and differences of the national animals for Canada and the U.S. Some reflections might include that the eagle is independent, it is a predator, and it soars above other creatures. The eagle could be called the “alpha bird” of the skies. The beaver, on the other hand, lives in a community (in fact, the beaver spends most of its time building and working on the family home) and is “victim” on the food (or fur) chain.

“Canada is one of the few countries that does not have some rapacious animal as its national animal,” wrote Maclean’s writer, Tom Wolfe. “It has a constructive animal, the beaver, which will not even bite your finger unless it is backed into a corner.” Now ask your students to think about how the characteristics of the animals apply to the values and reputation of each country. From this initial discussion you can begin to introduce the students to the role of the beaver in Canadian history and how it became Canada’s national animal in the mid-70s.

Beginning in the 17th century furs became one of the most sought after natural resources in Canada by the Europeans. At that time the beaver fur hat was “all the rage” in Europe. The under fur was processed into felt and then made into hats with different styles indicating an individual’s rank and status. The beaver industry was the primary reason for French settlement in New France and the impetus behind the founding of the Hudson’s Bay Company by the British in 1670. The “pursuit of the beaver” led to inland exploration and consequently opened the country to settlement. The fur trade was the basis of Canada’s early economy and therefore identity.

The beaver was used to represent Canada and Canadian values from early on. For example, the very first Canadian postage stamp created in 1851 featured a beaver. The Three-Pence Beaver would be the first pictorial stamp in the world and the first that



depicted an animal. The government at the time felt that the industrious nature of the beaver with its superb building skills and tenacity were perfect traits for a young nation attempting to carve out a place in the vast wilderness.

The beaver has been featured on the Canadian five-cent piece since 1937 and forms the logo for the Canadian Pacific Railway and Parks Canada. In the mid-60s when Canada held a national contest for a new flag design (a version of the British flag served as Canada’s flag until then), out of 3,500 entries almost 400 of them included the beaver. Many were of beavers gnawing, one was of a beaver wearing a Mountie hat, and another featured one large beaver and ten little ones – one for each province. Ultimately, the beaver lost out to the maple leaf but the importance of the animal to Canadians is clear.

The beaver became Canada’s national animal in 1975 almost 200 years after the eagle was established as the national bird for the U.S. (in 1782). Not uncommon in Canadian history, the adoption of the beaver was significantly affected by events south of the border.

The beaver was first proposed to parliament as Canada’s national emblem in 1974. However, it wasn’t until a journalist from the *Toronto Sun* heard that New York was about to adopt the beaver as its state symbol that Canadians took interest. Over 10,000 letters poured into the Canadian government, begging that the beaver be adopted as Canada’s national animal and that action be taken swiftly. Said one writer, “It would be a sad day indeed when that noble creature – the Beaver – falls victim to U.S. hands. Not content with having depleted Canada of most of her resources, those damn Yanks are now after her beaver . . . I greatly admire your stand in defending that poor, helpless creature.” Due to the tremendous support of the Canadian public, Bill C-373 was quickly passed through parliament and made law in 1975.

Symbols can be a fun way to begin to get students to think about national attributes and values. And, from there, intriguing histories including cultural and economic influences can be explored. The beaver and the eagle are a good starting place for this study and, as is often the case in North America, the histories of our two nations are once again intertwined as we see with the adoption of the beaver as Canada’s national animal.



Upcoming Events

May 31, 2008

Québec Workshop

Enseigner le français: La société québécoise comme outil didactique

University of Washington, Seattle Campus:
9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Cost: \$45 per participant (includes 6 clock hours and lunch)

This workshop will be conducted in French and is open to educators and students in teaching certificate programs or French-language programs. Directed by Dr. Thierry Giasson, Université Laval, with presentations by U.W. graduate students.

June 22 - June 27, 2008

30th Annual STUDY CANADA Summer Institute

• Sunday, June 22 - Monday, June 23
(Terminal City Club Tower Hotel)

• Tuesday, June 24 - Friday, June 27
(Whistler's Crystal Lodge)

Cost: \$550 (includes 3 quarter credits/40 clock hours, 5 nights' accommodation, 5 breakfasts & RT Vancouver-Whistler transportation)

Gain a strong foundation for teaching about Canada while exploring two of our neighbor's most beautiful, cosmopolitan and environmentally sustainable cities. Travel awards available.



Parks Canada logo.

Canada in the Classroom: K-12 Resources

WEBSITES

Symbols of Canada - Canadian Heritage Website
http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-cdsp/sc-cs/index_e.cfm

Teachers can rely on this Government of Canada website for ad-free information.

The Beaver - Knight's Canadian Info Collection
www.members.shaw.ca/kcic1/beaver.html
Discover more about the beaver's role in Canadian history and as a national symbol of Canada.

Official Symbols - CanadaInfo Website
http://www.craigmarlatt.com/canada/symbols_facts&lists/symbols.html

Images of each symbol are shared with a historical note for each.

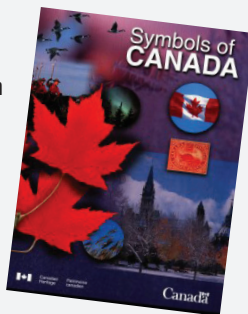
CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Symbols of Canada – Teacher Resource Book

Canadian Heritage (Canadian Government Publishing, 2002) \$11.95

<http://www.fedpubs.com/subject/govern/symbol.htm>

Canada's symbols are attractively presented with full-color images and short histories of each province and territory and its symbols. Double-sided (French/English) wall poster included.



That's Very Canadian!

An Exceptionally Interesting Report About All Things Canadian, by Rachel

by Vivien Bowers and Diane Eastman \$18.95 (Maple Tree Press, 2004) ISBN-13: 978-1897066041

This delightful book, told from the viewpoint of a student doing a project on Canada's symbols and cultural identity, is a fun way for all students to learn. The book also offers straightforward information on the differences between Canada and the USA.



Symbols of Canada – Binder Reference Sheet

(8-1/2 x 11")

LearnSmart Publishing Co.

http://www.learnsmart.ca/main/usa_customers.html

\$2.95 each

This bilingual notebook insert shows Canada's national, provincial and territorial symbols.



Maple Leaf Forever: A Celebration Of Canadian Symbols

By Donna and Nigel Hutchins (Firefly Books, 2006) ISBN:1550464744

This beautifully illustrated large-format pictorial features Canada's three most enduring national symbols: the Mountie, the maple leaf and the beaver.



LESSON PLANS

Grade 5 Unit Plan: "Identity – Canadian Symbols"

(Evergreen Curriculum Guide – Saskatchewan)

<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/elemsoc/g5u12ess.html>

This unit explores the beaver, the maple leaf, the RCMP and more with hyperlinks for student research.

"An Interactive Quiz on Canadian Symbols"

Social Sciences Teacher's Institute 2005 Lesson Plan
www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca/branches/curr/sci_tech/social/ssti/2005/nitamichelle/nitamichelle.shtml. Students can explore the symbols of Canada through an interactive game and other activities.

"Nifty New Flag"

Activity Plan (A Helping Hand - A Social Studies Index by Kevin Kearney)
<http://www.cbv.ns.ca/sstudies/crit10.html>
Students redesign the national flag as a culminating activity to a unit on Canada (or any other country).

K-12 STUDY CANADA



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