

Greetings Teachers!

The 2008-2009 academic year is an important one for Canadian Studies outreach and we're glad that you will be part of it. The theme of this issue, teaching about the Northwest Passage, will be appreciated by secondary-level teachers and a topic of interest to all others since world-wide attention to shipping rights is increasing.

Since our Spring 2008 issue, we marked the 30th anniversary of the annual *STUDY CANADA Summer Institute for K-12 Educators*. Few professional development programs can claim such long-standing success! There is no better way to establish a solid foundation for teaching about Canada than to spend six days in Vancouver and Whistler, British Columbia, with us. Information and the 2009 registration form are online at www.k12studycanada.org/scsi.shtml

We also hosted the Annual Québec workshop—conducted entirely in French! Working in conjunction with UW in the High Schools, we offer the program to support professional development activities for regional French teachers. As

always, it was a great success and we appreciate the support of the Québec Government Office in Los Angeles. At the end of June, the annual *Summer Seminar for Educators* was held in conjunction with the Outreach Centers in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies. This workshop also drew an enthusiastic crowd who were introduced to whaling practices in Canada.

We have been busy the past few months making connections with leaders in social studies education on both sides of the border to improve educational networks for all. Last month, for example, a joint National Resource Centers on Canada exhibit was held at the National Council for Geographic Education conference in Dearborn, Michigan. We welcomed a large contingent of American and Canadian geography specialists to our circle. However, it is the upcoming National Council for the Social Studies conference in Houston, Texas, that is admittedly where more attention will be given to Canada than ever before. Grant support from Canada's Department of International Affairs and Foreign Trade has made it possible to involve participation of 16 distinguished

Canadian educators at the conference. It's a sweeping effort that we hope many of you can take advantage of. You will find more resources on Canada in the exhibit halls and be able to attend almost 20 sessions on Canada. In addition, Canadian flavor will be added to the President's Breakfast with an appearance by Samuel de Champlain. This will mark the 400th anniversary of settlement in *la belle province*. In addition, a special series of geography workshops for Houston area teachers will take place the week before the NCSS conference. Support from the Québec Government Office in Atlanta as well as the Consulate of Canada in Houston and the Province of Alberta have helped make our joint National Resource Centers on Canada initiative so extensive. Visit www.ncss.org to learn about the conference and www.k12studycanada.org for additional details about "Canada is Coming to NCSS!"

Tina Storer, Western Washington University
Tina.storer@wwu.edu

Nadine Fabbri, University of Washington
nfabb@u.washington.edu

The Northwest Passage —by Nadine Fabbri

Introduction

Teaching your students about the Northwest Passage is an excellent way to introduce them to one of the most interesting and relevant international issues today – the race for Arctic resources and territory. We have all heard about climate change, but few realize that as a result of climate change many countries are now staking claim to the Arctic. This has even raised concern over a potential polar war.

Why the sudden interest in the Arctic? Global warming is impacting the Arctic more than anywhere else on earth. Sea ice is melting at a rapid rate. This means that the natural resources that have been buried under the ice for millennia (gas, oil, and minerals) may soon be accessible. In addition, the passageway through Canada's Arctic archipelago is opening up. It could become feasible for shipping, cutting thousands of miles off the Panama Canal route. Canada argues that the Northwest Passage is hers. But Russia and the U.S. strongly disagree. They believe that the Northwest Passage is an international waterway and therefore open to commercial traffic.

How will we resolve this issue? It is extremely complex. Who owns the Arctic involves the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, the measuring of the continental shelf to prove extended territory, historic proof of continuous occupation of land, the Inuit "voice" in the debate, etc. From this one issue, you can involve your students in the study of science, history, law, and geography.

History of the Northwest Passage

Over 500 hundred years ago, the Western European nations began a competition to find a sea route to the Far East. This led to European settlements in the Americas and the extraction of tremendous resources. Spain got South America and all its gold, and the French got furs from North America. The British were a little less successful and therefore began looking for a way to make their mark.

About 75 years after Columbus, a grand myth drew British explorer, Sir Martin Frobisher, to the Far North. A colleague had the notion that an Atlantis-type land lay in that direction and that it was rich in gold and provided the shortest route to the Orient. Frobisher convinced Queen Elizabeth to fund his journey.

Frobisher sailed into Frobisher Bay, Baffin Island in 1576, making landfall in today's Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut. He believed that the land that formed the north of the bay was China and the lands to the south were North America. As proof of the success of his journey, Frobisher took back three Asian "specimens" (Inuit), as well as rock he assumed was gold. Queen Elizabeth gave him a hero's welcome and funded two more explorations. Though they later realized that they were not in Asia and that the rock was worthless quartz, Frobisher's voyages nonetheless kicked off the 400-year search for the Northwest Passage.

20th Century Tensions over the Northwest Passage

Dozens of explorers attempted to navigate the Northwest Passage in those 400 years many with harrowing tales of ice-locked ships, scurvy, and starvation. Finally, in the early 20th century, a Norwegian explorer,

Roald Amundsen, was successful. However, it took Amundsen three years to navigate the Passage — a bit too lengthy a period of time to constitute a viable shipping route. Britain eventually handed the Arctic islands over to Canada. At this time, there was little to worry about in terms of sovereignty over the region.

Then, in 1985 the U.S. sent a ship, the *Polar Sea*, through the Northwest Passage in part to assert that this was an international waterway. The Canadian government attempted to force the U.S. to request permission but failed in its efforts, causing the government some humiliation. The Canadian public was outraged. This was a direct challenge to Canadian sovereignty. The passage was still not viable for commercial travel but the incident certainly raised Canada's concerns about sovereignty over its Arctic lands and seas.

The Northwest Passage in the 21st Century

Today, all has changed. Now that the ice is melting and the Northwest Passage is opening, the issue over ownership is intensifying. For example, Canada and Denmark are fighting over a speck of stone (Hans Island) that lies between Greenland and Ellesmere Island. Russia planted a titanium flag on the ocean floor below the North Pole last summer staking its claim to the Far North. This summer the U.S. ran three research expeditions to measure the continental shelf off of Alaska in an effort to extend territorial jurisdiction. And, throughout all of this increased activity, the Canadian national Inuit association and the Inuit Circumpolar Council are intensely involved, adding yet another dimension to the discussion.

The issue over who owns the Arctic is complex and involves many voices today. Certainly, it is a vital issue for your students to be aware of and to begin to understand and address in their own thinking. Finally, the Arctic is a fantastic way to bring the study of Canada into the international classroom.

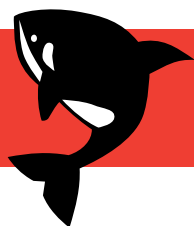
(The author thanks Anne Hilton, Canadian Studies Center, for her editing of this article.)



The Mercator map of the North Pole, with rivers running into the earth's core at the Pole, from the late 16th century.



Many attempts at navigating the Northwest Passage ended in disaster. *Polar Sea* by Caspar David Friedrich, 1774-1840.



Fall 2008 Presentations and Displays on Canada

South Carolina Geographic Alliance Geofest

Study Canada: 5 Themes of Geography/Vancouver 2010
Presentation by Cynthia Carlisle, Teacher Associate
Sept. 8: University of South Carolina (Columbia, SC)

Arizona Geographic Alliance Geo Day Fest: Mapping the Americas

Canadian Stories: Mama Do You Love Me?
Presentation by Cynthia Carlisle, Teacher Associate
Presentation by Cynthia Shoemaker, Teacher Associate
Sept. 20: Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ)

National Council for Geographic Education 93rd Annual Conference

National Resource Centers on Canada Display
Canada in Your K-12 Classroom
Presentation by Meghan Hoyer, Teacher Associate
Oct 11-13: Hyatt Regency Hotel (Dearborn, MI)

WSCSS In-Service:

Exploring Our Past – Celebrating Our Traditions
The Great Arctic Air Adventure
Presentation by Martha Dietz, Teacher Associate
Oct 12: Edmonds-Woodway HS (Edmonds, WA)

Colorado Congress of Foreign Language Teachers: 29th Annual CCFLT Fall Conference (Linguafest)

K-12 STUDY CANADA resource support
Oct 4: Cheyenne HS (Colorado Springs, CO)

88th Annual NCSS Conference: Embrace the Future!

National Resource Centers on Canada Display
Joint NRCs Initiative: *Canada is Coming to NCSS!*
18 sessions, 16 Canadian educators, resources galore!
See www.k12studycanada.org for session schedule.
November 13-16: Convention Center (Houston, TX)



International Studies Schools Association 8th Annual Conference – Global Sustainable Development: Infusing the Issues in the K-12 Classroom

National Resource Centers on Canada Display
January 17-19, 2009: Harbour Island Hotel (Tampa, FL)

Canada in the Classroom: K-12 Resources

Consider the DVDs and curricula included below as well as the six online news articles that provide excellent background content and maps relating to the Northwest Passage. All resources are suitable for middle and high school classrooms.

NOVA Programming: Arctic Passage

(online curricula includes a Teacher's Guide)
www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/arctic/
Curriculum developed for this PBS program allows students to relive two legendary expeditions online—one tragic, one triumphant—to pioneer a route through the Northwest Passage. A DVD of the 112-minute program can be ordered through WGBH, the Boston public television station that produces NOVA at <http://shop.wgbh.org/product/search?terms=arctic+passage/>.



Biomes: Arctic Changes

(Grades 6-8 Ecology Lesson Plans)
Produced by The Discovery Channel
Objectives include: learning the geography of the Arctic and Roald Amundsen's route through the Northwest Passage; defining global warming and discussing its effect on the Arctic; and writing a journal.
http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/biomes_arctic/



In Depth

Northwest Passage: The Arctic Grail



This article provides an overview that takes students from the early quest for passage to the Orient to the modern issues unleashed now that global warming has made the passage passable.
www.cbc.ca/news/background/northwest-passage/
(Last Updated Aug. 8, 2006 CBC News)

Northwest Passage redux **The Washington Times**

The heart of the debate is for international shipping rights since an open Northwest Passage cuts 5,000 nautical miles from shipping routes between Europe and Asia. This article explains why Canada considers the Northwest Passage its internal waters but the United States insists it is an international strait.

www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/jun/12/20050612-123835-3711r/
(Published June 12, 2005)

Arctic Meltdown:

The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming



By Scott G. Borgerson
Thanks to global warming, the Arctic icecap is rapidly melting, opening up access to massive natural resources and creating shipping shortcuts that could save billions of dollars a year. But there are currently no clear rules governing this economically and strategically vital region. Unless Washington leads the way toward a multilateral diplomatic solution, the Arctic could descend into armed conflict.
www.foreignaffairs.org/20080301faessay87206/scott-g-borgerson/arctic-meltdown.html
(Foreign Affairs, March/April 2008)

A four-part series on Canada's North



Randy Boswell & Andrew Mayeda, Canwest News Service.
All articles relate to politics of the Arctic—the last in the series will be of particular interest to your classrooms—Part 1: *A new line on the map*; Part 2: *Tough talk taps into national pride*; Part 3: *The rush for oil*; Part 4: *Who owns the Northwest Passage?*
www.canada.com/topics/news/features/arcticambitions/index.html
(Published: Wednesday, August 13, 2008)

Diary: Taking the Northwest Passage



By David Shukman
A BBC science and environment correspondent has readers journey with him on the Canadian Coast Guard research vessel, the Amundsen, as it crosses the Northwest Passage. His journal considers territorial and Arctic politics, environmental toxins in the area, wildlife and—of course—the extreme cold. Fascinating.
news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7033831.stm
(Last Updated: Monday, 15 October 2007)

Northwest Passage: Map of Arctic Sea Ice



Considers (and shows) how global warming is opening Canada's Arctic. Includes maps.
geology.com/articles/northwest-passage.shtml

K-12 Study Canada layout and design by Alessandro Leveque.



WESTERN
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

University of Washington
Canadian Studies Center
Jackson School of International Studies
Box 353650
Seattle, WA 98195-3650

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