

Canadian War of 1812 Documents

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Teacher's Resource Collection



History Comes Alive with 1812 Documents for the Classroom

1812 Teacher Resource Collection includes:

- 36 images of source documents and contemporary pictures on CD-ROM
- 52 page teacher guide that explains background and gives student activities
- 6 Blackline Masters for additional student work

Here is our youtube link for author presentation on War of 1812 Documents <http://youtu.be/dkUSz0k8YBY>

Flip over for Teacher Guide information

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Teacher Guide

Sample Teacher guide pages

For each document:

- Background notes that explains the context and nature of the document
- Student questions on the content plus extension activities
- Fascinating and little know facts on the documents

Treason Poster



HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPTS

Historical perspectives; change and continuity; working with primary sources

BRIEF BACKGROUND FOR THE TEACHER

It is well known that throughout history, the British Navy was the primary source of England's power. Certainly, the struggle for supremacy on the Great Lakes was a key component in determining the outcomes of the War of 1812. However, recruiting for the Navy was a difficult task, as the job of sailor was known to be a brutal occupation. Sailors endured poor pay, poor diets, disease, years away from home and family and were often forcibly enlisted.

The number of sailors lost to the Royal Navy each year to death, disease and desertion was quite high – and England needed to fill those ranks with bodies – which was often done by force. This poster, dating from the War of 1812, illustrates some of the propaganda that was used to woo young men into enlisting.

FASCINATING FACTS

- A guinea is worth approximately \$70.00 in today's currency. One guinea was approximately the same value as 20 shillings. The last guinea was minted in 1813.
- "Taking the king's shilling" meant to agree to enlist as a soldier or sailor. This recruitment relied often on force or deception. For example, drink was often used to get a potential recruit drunk. It is legendary that beer steins were created with a clear bottom so as to view if the "shilling" had been dropped in one's glass.
- Naval press gangs roamed ports looking to forcibly recruit.
- In times of desperate need to fill the ranks of sailor on royal vessels, criminals were often "recruited" – given the choice of a harsh sentence or enlisting.
- The Royal Navy practiced "impressment". British naval officers often detained and inspected American ships in an attempt to find "runaway" subjects: those sailors who were born British subjects, but were employed on American ships. This was a major grievance of the United States prior to the War, who believed it to be an infringement of sovereign rights. It is believed to be one of the causes of the outbreak of conflict.
- It is estimated that about 6,000 American sailors were "reclaimed" by the British between 1803-1812. Often, by the British storming aboard American ships, and forcibly taking anyone of suspicion!
- A great deal of the problem was the evolving notion of "citizen" vs. "subject". From the British perspective, if one was born a subject, it was impossible to become otherwise. In other words, if you were born a subject of England you were always bound to serve the King – an obligation that ended only in death. The American idea of "citizen", however, was an idea born of the Republic, and enshrined the idea that people could choose citizenship of their own free will.
- The Royal Navy offered little to no shore leave! As cited by historian Ron Dale in *The Invasion of Canada*, the United States Navy sometimes welcomed British sailors who deserted and came over to join "the enemy". The United States then benefited from their experience and expertise, and offered more freedom to their recruits.

QUESTIONS/ACTIVITIES

Content / Fact:

1. What is a "guinea"?
2. What words are in bold, or appear larger? Write them down. Why are they emphasized?
3. How does this poster appeal to young men? Write down two lines from the poster.
4. How did the size of the person change how much they would be paid?

5. At the bottom of the poster it reads "The bringers of Recruits will be handsomely rewarded". What does this mean?

Opinion / Analytical:

1. Would this poster have been successful in persuading young men to join? Why or why not? Be sure to provide reference to a line in the poster.
2. Would this poster work today? Why or why not? What has changed in our world today?
3. Does the state have a right to force its citizens to participate in its wars?

Suggested Activities:

1. Create a recruiting poster or commercial for the Royal Navy during the War of 1812. However, create an advertisement that tells the brutal truth of what it means to join. Display around room and discuss.
2. Find a current recruiting ad for the Canadian Navy. This might be in print or in the form of a short commercial online. Compare the techniques the Canadian Navy uses today to recruit young men and women with those techniques of the early 19th century. What techniques are the same? (Note to teacher: You might want to discuss and make a list of propaganda techniques for class reference)

The teacher guide includes rich background research on each document. CD allows for easy teacher presentation. Incorporates inquiry teaching approach. Contains unique and lesser know information. Documents include - letters, diary entries, posters, paintings, artifacts from ROM. Supplementary images include maps of the battles, modern paintings on sea battles, reenactors photos and more.