

Teacher's Guide for COBBLESTONE Golden Age of the Steamboat

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NOTE: To give students a starting point, you might begin by discussing "Now That's Progress" on **page 7** as well as the final paragraph in the column to the left.

For "Race for the Golden Antlers" (pages 2-4)

1. Provide students with a United States map showing the Mississippi. Ask students to highlight the river from the starting point to the ending point of the race.
2. Pair students and supply each pair with 2 small paper clips and a 12" ruler. Ask students to re-enact details of the race; each paper clip ("piloted" by one of the students) represents one of the steamboats, and each inch on the ruler represents 100 miles.

For "When Rivers Were Roads" (pages 5-7)

1. As a scanning exercise, ask students to quickly locate one negative about traveling by river.
2. Then ask students to find a half-dozen ways river travel has played a part in America's past.

For "Steam's Evolving Engine" (pages 10-13)

1. Read aloud and discuss Thomas Jefferson's quote on page 10.
2. Ask students to find the names of seven individuals who contributed to the development of the steam ship, the approximate date of that contribution, and the nature of that development.

For "Folly or Fortune" (pages 14-15)

Creative Assignment: Pretend that you (at the age you are right now) were on that famous August 17, 1807 steamboat ride. Either draw a series of pictures representing that journey or write a detailed journal entry about your experience.

For "The Steamboat Crew" (pages 18-20)

1. Provide students with a reproduced copy of the article and three markers: red, yellow, and blue.
2. Ask students
 - to highlight all the names of the various jobs on the steamboat in yellow,
 - to underline in red the dangers of working on the steamboat,
 - and to circle in blue the paragraph that describes the various decks.

For "No Bottom Ahead" (pages 20-21)

1. After reading and discussing the article together, ask students to arrange the following in order of depth from shallow to deep.

(Note: Explain chart and point out that the following list is a combination of leadline measurement, water depth, and line marking.)

Quarter Less Ta-Ree
9 feet
Three knots
24 feet
One knot
No Bottom
Quarter Less Four
15 feet
Mark Twain
Quarter One

For “Dangerous Waters” and “Safety First” (pages 26-30)

Study questions:

Page 26:

1. What “may well be the most well-known” maritime disaster?
2. Was it the first and/or the worst?
3. Approximately how many lives and boats were lost between 1807 and 1850?
4. What was the reason behind most steamboat losses?
5. “Steamboat pilots also had to be wary of _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.”
6. What were 14 percent of all steam vessels destroyed by in 1823?

Page 27:

7. How many passengers was the *Sultana* supposed to carry? How many was it carrying when its boilers exploded?
8. What does evidence suggest caused the explosion on the *Pennsylvania*?

Page 28:

9. What caused the disaster on the *Ben Sharrod*?
10. What were early riverboats made of?

Page 29:

11. What did the boat owner, captain, and crew of the *General Sherman* fail to do?

Page 30:

12. What had to be licensed under the Federal Navigation Act of 1789?
13. Why wasn't that act enough to correct the dangers?
14. What did the Steamboat Bill of 1838 call for?
15. What did the Steamboat Act of 1852 change?
16. What changed in 1871?

For “Settling an Argument” (pages 34-35)

1. Begin by reading and discussing the last paragraph on page 35.
2. Explain “intrastate” and “interstate” commerce.
3. Refer to the board game Monopoly to explain the term.
4. Ask students to “interview” both Gibbons and Ogden and write down each man’s opinion on his right to run a steamboat.
5. Ask students who actually “won” the argument.

