

What Should we Remember about the War of 1812?

by Allan Hux

Suggested grade level: Intermediate/Senior

Suggested time: 2 class periods

Brief Description of the Task

Have students consider what is historically significant to remember about the War of 1812 and how we may interpret and commemorate the 200 years of peace that have followed.

Historical Thinking Concepts

- Historical Significance
- Continuity and Change

Learning Goals

Students will participate in an activity that will allow them to:

1. Reflect on the continuum of disagreements that occur between individuals.
2. Critically examine the 200 years of peace since 1812 and recognize that there have been many disagreements in this period.
3. Develop a proposal to commemorate the Canadian-American Peace Bicentenary

Materials

Photocopies of all appendices.

Prior Knowledge and Skills

It would be an asset for students to have:

- some familiarity with the range of conflicts that had occurred in North America from the early 17th century to 1814 among First Nations, France, Britain and Spain
- an understanding of the historical thinking concept of **historical significance**
- a list of the main military events in the War of 1812

- internet search skills

Assessment

- individual student contributions to group work and group performance
- teacher feedback to groups
- student completion of task organizers
- peer and teacher feedback on student proposals to commemorate the Canadian-American Bicentennial of Peace

Detailed Lesson Plan

Focus Question: What is significant to remember about the War of 1812 today?

Part 1: Disagreements in the Schoolyard

1. Teachers introduce a discussion of the range of disagreements that may occur between 2 people in the schoolyard and the words that could be used to describe the intensity of these disagreements. Teachers may ask students to reflect quickly on the range of these disagreements individually, in pairs, or apply a think-pair-share strategy using **Appendix 1: Conflicts in the Schoolyard**. Students should be invited to suggest other words that identify other types of disagreements or conflicts. Bullying may include cyber-bullying or students may suggest it as a separate category.

Part 2: Disagreements Between Countries

1a) Introduce or review the historical thinking concept of **historical significance**.

b) Review with students the fact that a state of war between French, Dutch, British and Spanish settlers and their First Nations' allies was common and recurring in North America for 200 years from the early seventeenth century until 1815. Teachers may use a timeline from 1608 to 1815 to facilitate this discussion. This is a review opportunity.

2a) Here are some possible questions to explore during a class discussion:

- What were the consequences of the horrors, losses of life and property, and high government debts in the War of 1812?
- Has there been another war between B.N.A./Canada and the U.S.A.?
- What *changed* in the pattern of relations between these territories from 1605 to the present?
- How important were the *consequences and changes* for the people in B.N.A./Canada and the U.S.A.?
- Why did the First Nations not enjoy the same level of peaceful relations with Americans as they did with Canadians?
- What should we remember? The War of 1812 or the peace that followed?

b) The teacher then introduces the task asking students individually, in pairs, or small groups to decide how to commemorate the 200 years of peace between Canada and the United States.

“How would you recommend that Canadians celebrate 200 years of peace between Canada and the U.S.A. in your school, community, province or the country as a whole?”

Distribute an article written by Thomas Socknat, published in *The Toronto Star*, on Tuesday, August 7, 2012. (See **Appendix 2** in the Lesson 17 Appendices file.)

Depending on the reading level of students in your class, conduct a read aloud of Thomas Socknat ‘s article, use another shared reading strategy, or have students read the article in pairs to stimulate their thinking on how to commemorate the peace.

3. The teacher introduces a discussion of the relations between Canada and the U.S.A. since the War of 1812. Some possible prompts are:

- How was this change from recurring warfare to peaceful conflicts achieved?
- Have our relations remained peaceful over the past 200 years?
- What do we mean by “peaceful”?
- Have British North America/Canada and the U.S.A. had any disagreements?
- Have there actually been any armed groups moving across the borders or any shooting across the borders?
- How do you think that the U.S.A. and Canada settled their disagreements since 1815?

4. Give students a copy of **Appendix 3: Some Disagreements between B.N.A./Canada and U.S.A.** (See Lesson 17 Appendices file.)

Depending on your class, have students work individually, in pairs or small groups. Ask students to conduct a quick Internet search using the computers in your classroom, a computer lab, the school library, or as a homework assignment. Direct students to search their event using the following websites:

The Canadian Encyclopedia,
<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>

Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

See a list of direct links for the 13 events listed in Appendix 3 in **Appendix 4 - Web Links on Some Disagreements between B.N.A./Canada and U.S.A.** if you need to save class time.

If you decide to have students do an open web search using a search engine, review the criteria for this activity.

Part 3: Consolidation

1. At the beginning of the second class (approximately), have students share their research on the disagreements between B.N.A./Canada and U.S.A. using the notes they have made on Appendix 3.

Teachers may use a whole class or a jigsaw strategy.

2. In the last half of the second class have students finalize their plan to commemorate the 200 years of peace. Students may be free to modify or challenge Thomas Socknat's thesis that we have enjoyed 200 years of peace as part of their plan. Their plans may be recorded and shared using a number of different strategies depending on the type of performance and product that the teacher would like them to create and share with the class.

One strategy would be to have students present their plan in point-form on a single large sheet of paper which would be posted. Then have students do a gallery walk around the class to review the proposals of their classmates.

8. Invite the students to share their proposals with the broader school community through the Principal or the community at large, or to a local newspaper or elected official. This may take the form of an email or letter requesting an opportunity to present or display their proposal. The class could vote to select the best proposal or the top 3 proposals to be communicated.

Lesson 17 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Disagreements in the School Yard

Type	Description	Ways to solve it
Misunderstanding		
Argument		
Tensions		
Conflict		
Harassment		
Bullying		
Fight		

Lesson 17 Appendices

Appendix 2 - 1812 Bicentennial Should Celebrate 200 years of Peace*

by Thomas Socknat, *The Toronto Star*, August 7, 2012

This summer, with its array of festive events marking the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, is a good time to reassess what we think is most important to celebrate.

Clearly, the war is significant not only because Canada remained in British hands but because it was the last international war fought on Canadian soil. For decades afterward, to most Canadians, especially those in Ontario, any reference to “the war” meant the War of 1812, the war fought at their doorstep (a frightening reality that Canadians have not experienced since).

But the war was never popular and somewhat divisive. Except for a few militia outfits, British troops and their native allies did most of the fighting while the general populace was lukewarm, at best, in their support. Upper Canadians with American ancestry had their loyalty questioned and pacifist religious groups, such as Mennonites and Quakers, who had been invited to settle in the colony with the promise that they would not have to take up arms, were required to pay fines and were generally viewed as outsiders.

Of course, this wave of suspicion and anti-Americanism receded in time, followed by an era of co-operation with the United States. As the 19th century came to a close it was this Canadian-American experiment, two nations living side by side and settling their differences through arbitration and mediation without recourse to military action, that was heralded as a model for the world.

By 1912, therefore, when Canada observed the centenary of the War of 1812, it wasn't the war but the 100 years of peace – the Anglo-American Peace Centenary – that commanded attention. The prime mover behind this idea was the future prime minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, and with his encouragement the Canadian Peace Centenary Association co-ordinated various centenary projects, which included everything from monuments to education on Canadian-American relations, with most public festivities slated for 1915.

While most of the celebratory plans were cancelled with the outbreak of World War I, ultimately some monuments were completed as reminders of this remarkable achievement: Peace Arches on both sides of the continent, at Blaine, Wash., on the British Columbia border and at Rouses Point, N.Y., on the Quebec border; the peace garden straddling the 49th parallel between Manitoba and North Dakota, and the famous Peace Bridge linking Buffalo with Fort Erie.

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As well, the Canadian-American example of a century of peaceful relations through negotiations, what James A. Macdonald, the managing editor of the Toronto Globe, hailed as “the North American Idea,” continued to be espoused by Canada as the best hope for mankind – a belief as valid now as it was then.

Today, with the bicentennial of the War of 1812 upon us, we need to reset our priorities. Of course, it is entirely appropriate to enjoy the nostalgic moment: dress-up, re-enact battles and commemorate the war, but we should also think on a grander scale and perhaps finally, 100 years later, carry through with the kind of peace celebrations that were planned for 1915 but cut short by the Great War. It is the 200 years of peace between Canada and the United States, something often taken for granted, that should assume centre stage in bicentennial celebrations. Canadians (and Americans too) also need to be imaginative in how this should be done. We really don't need any more physical monuments (although some of those mentioned may be in need of refurbishing) but rather something more timely such as a Can-Am student exchange program or major scholarships (like the Rhodes). Or maybe even a joint Can-Am holiday.

The possibilities are endless. It is our opportunity to think big and do something important to mark the occasion – the Canadian-American Peace Bicentenary. (Certainly the recent cancellation of the “Understanding Canada” program that encouraged and supported Canadian Studies abroad is not a step in the right direction.). The simple fact is that in our post-Sept. 11 world two centuries of continuous peace between Canada and the United States truly deserves to be celebrated.

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Appendix 3 – Some Disagreements between B.N.A./Canada and U.S.A.

Event	Issue	Solution
1. War ships on the Great Lakes 1815-1817 Rush-Bagot Agreement		
2. Rebellions of 1837-1838		
3. Oregon Territory 1818-1846		
4. Montreal Annexation Manifesto & riots 1849		
5. Underground Railway of African Americans 1830s - 1863		

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6. U.S.A. Cancellation of Reciprocity Treaty 1865		
7. Fenian Raids of 1865-1866		
8. Canada's Purchase of Northwest and Red River Rebellion 1869-70		
9. Sioux Chief Sitting Bull's flight to Canada 1877-1881		
10. Alaska Boundary Dispute of 1896-1903		
11. Start of World War I 1914 - 1917		

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12. Start of World War II 1939-1841		
13. September 11, 2001, international terrorism, and the Second War on Iraq		

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Appendix 4 – Web Links on Some Disagreements between B.N.A./Canada and U.S.A.

Event	Web Links
1. War ships on the Great Lakes 1815 -1817 & the Rush-Bagot Agreement 1817	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/rushbagot-agreement http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/008004/f2/H-1_en.pdf pp.4-5
2. Rebellions of 1837-1838	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/rebellions-of-1837 http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/featured/remember-the-icarolinei-the-temptations-of-unilateralism
3. Boundary disputes 1815 - 1842	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Webster-Ashburton_Treaty
3 Oregon Territory & Treaty 1818-1846	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/featured/fortyninth-parallel http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon_boundary_dispute
4. Montreal Riots and Annexation Manifesto 1849	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/montreal-riots http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/annexation-association
5. Underground Railroad of African Americans 1830s - 1863	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/underground-railroad http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/slavery http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/black/people.asp#black_burn http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thornton_Blackburn
6. U.S.A. Cancellation of Reciprocity Treaty 1854-1865 (during American Civil War)	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian%E2%80%93American_Reciprocity_Treaty

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7. Fenian Raids of 1865-1871	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/fenians http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/on-line-exhibits/fenians/civil-war-era.aspx
8. Canada's Purchase of Northwest and Red River Rebellion 1869-70	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/red-river-colony http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/red-river-rebellion http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rupert%27s_Land#Sale_to_Canada http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/49th_parallel_north#The_Canada_US_United_States_border
9. Sioux Chief Sitting Bull's flight into Canada 1877-1881	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/sitting-bull
10. Alaska Boundary Dispute of 1896-1903	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/alaska-boundary-dispute
11. Start of World War I 1914 - 1917	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_entry_into_World_War_I http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/first-world-war-wwi
12. Start of World War II 1939-1945	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/second-world-war-wwii
13. September 11, 2001, international terrorism and the Second War on Iraq	http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/terrorism http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/jean-chretien http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_War_2003