

INDUSTRIAL AMERICA AND THE ERA OF  
WORLD WAR (1870-1945) AND THE  
MODERN AGE (1945 TO PRESENT)

THE  
PASSAIC  
TEXTILE STRIKE  
1926-1927

H  
I  
S  
T  
O  
R  
I  
C  
  
P  
A  
S  
S  
A  
I  
C

**LESSON PLAN**



A historical map of Passaic, New Jersey, showing the Passaic River, Dundee Canal, and various industrial buildings and streets. The map is oriented vertically with the river and canal running from top to bottom. The text is centered over the map.

# HISTORIC PASSAIC

INDUSTRIAL AMERICA AND THE ERA OF WORLD WAR (1870-1945)  
AND THE MODERN AGE (1945 TO PRESENT)

LESSON PLAN

**Developed for the Passaic High School Department of History  
by Christine Hilferty, URS, Inc., in association with the New Jersey  
Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.**

---

**Subject:** American History, New Jersey History

**Grade Level:** 9 – 12      **Date:** April 2002

---

**Historic Periods:**

Industrial America and the Era of World War (1870 – 1945)  
The Modern Age (1945 to Present)

**Goal:**

The purpose of this lesson is multifaceted. It is intended to give students an enhanced awareness and greater appreciation of the history of Passaic. Topics include immigration, ethnicity, industry, and economics, to provide students with a comprehensive introduction to the origins of their surroundings. Students will develop the ability to see changes in the built environment as a continuing process connected by the experiences of generations who lived and worked in these same places.

**Prerequisites:**

Students are expected to possess a general knowledge of how economic systems work, how industry can affect the economic systems of a town, the effects of industry and population growth on the environment (and vice versa), how to read maps, and of how archaeologists and architectural historians generally use artifacts, historic records, and standing resources to interpret the past.

**Instructional Objectives:**

1. Students will gain a better understanding of the City of Passaic and be able to discuss in-depth topics related to its history. Topics and questions to explore include: Who were among the first immigrants to come to Passaic? What was the major industry of the area? What factors affected the economic stability of the city? What were the causes for an economic downturn in the city?
2. Students will identify social and economic reasons leading people (including their own families) to settle in Passaic, New Jersey.
3. Students should make an effort to relate their family's experience in coming to America/ Passaic to that of the first immigrants of Passaic.

4. Students will strengthen their map reading skills.
5. Students should be able to identify changes to the physical environment as a result of increased industry and population.
6. Students should be able to discuss other environmental issues involved in industrial and technological progress, including the effects of industry on air and water quality, wildlife ecology, etc.

**Instructional Procedures:**

1. Using census information, historic maps, and New Jersey atlas maps, lead students in classroom discussions on changing patterns in population density, ethnicity, industry, physical features, etc. Be sure to explore topics such as: Why do people choose to settle in particular areas? What benefits/resources did Passaic offer over other locations in terms of industry, settlement, transportation, etc.? In what way did immigrants adapt to these new resources? How did the environment change with the increasing population and industry?
2. Have each student take the Dundee Canal Industrial Historic District Walking Tour. Students may choose or be assigned one of the industries or historic places on the tour to research and write short essays and/or give oral reports on their findings. This may be done in groups or individually.
3. Have students trace their family tree back to their family's country of origin. The students should prepare a poster exhibit of their family tree; this assignment should also include reasons why the family came to America and New Jersey. Students should be encouraged to interview family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, or parents for details; the importance of oral history should be emphasized.
4. Break students into groups of about three students each. Assign each group one historic block in Passaic and have them compare historic maps, photographs, paintings, newspaper clippings, and any other resource they may find to more recent materials regarding that block. Prompt students to pay close attention to Passaic's physical environment, specifically what has changed and what has stayed relatively the same since the turn of the century. Students should use this information to create a display of now-and-then photos and descriptions about their block. Use the historic poster created by URS as an example.

**Materials (see attached Contacts page):**

1. Walking tour brochure, *Dundee Canal Industrial Historic District*, created by URS for the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

2. New Jersey atlases and historic maps, these materials should be available at local libraries and museums.
3. Historic photographs also available at local museums and libraries.
4. Historic background research text on Passaic, NJ.
5. Historic poster display created by URS.

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

Assessment is based on student participation during in-class discussions, performance on poster exhibits, displays, short essays and/or oral presentations. Some information may be incorporated into quizzes or tests for assessment purposes.

**Connections:**

These exercises provide students with the opportunity to feel connected to history and their town. In addition, the family tree and oral history activities, as well as discussions about the physical and biological environment, economics, and industry will help the transition to other major topics of study required in the standards set forth by the New Jersey Department of Education. These activities can be modified for use at the elementary and middle school levels. At the high school level, these activities fulfill, in part, the following standards:

- Standard 6.5, Indicator 13. Analyze the mutual influences among different cultures throughout time.
  - Indicator 15. Interpret how various cultures have adapted to their environments.
  - Indicator 18. Evaluate the mutual influence of technology and culture.
- Standard 6.6, Indicator 14. Analyze the successes and failures of various economic systems in meeting the needs and wants of their people.
  - Indicator 16. Analyze and evaluate economic growth in the context of environmental conditions and sustainable development.
- Standard 6.7, Indicator 12. Use maps of physical and human characteristics of the world to answer complex geographical questions.
- Standard 6.8, Indicator 15. Analyze the processes that change urban structure, and the impact of changes in urban areas.
  - Indicator 17. Explain how physical, social, cultural, and economic processes shape the features of places and regions.

## Resources

National Register of Historic Places Registration Forms on file with the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

“Dundee Canal Industrial Historic District”, Prepared by Marvin Brown, February 11, 1998.

“Botany Worsted Mills Historic District”, June 17, 1991.

Tull, Stephen W., et al.

1999 *Archaeological Investigations at Sites 28PA39, 28PA40, 28PA145, The Early Dundee Canal Terminus Area and the Eagle Foundry Site, Route 21 Extension, Cultural Resources Mitigation, Passaic County, New Jersey*, pp. 2.22 – 2.33. Prepared for Howard Needles Tammen & Bergendoff, Fairfield, New Jersey and the Bureau of Environmental Analysis, New Jersey Department of Transportation. February 1, 1999.

Tull, Stephen W. and Tony McNichol

2002 *Industrial Passaic: Magnet for Immigrants*. Poster display prepared for the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. URS Corporation: Florence, New Jersey.

URS Corporation

2002 *Dundee Canal Industrial Historic District Walking Tour Guide*. Prepared for the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. URS Corporation: Florence, New Jersey.

## Contacts

### Libraries

Reid Memorial Library, Kathleen Molica	(973) 777-0474
Passaic Public Library, Dir. Dave Robertson	(973) 779-0474
Clifton Public Library, Librarian Pat Ferro	(973) 471-0555

### Historic Repositories

Passaic County Historical Society Museum Director, Andrew Shick	(973) 881-2761
Julius Forstman Public Research Librarian, Mimi Horn	(973) 779-0474

### Schools

Passaic Public High School Librarian, Anne Immedidto	(973) 470-5605
Clifton Superintendent of Schools, William Leiss	(973) 470-2260

Public Offices

City of Clifton Mayor, James Anzaldi (973) 470-5757  
City of Passaic Mayor, Samuel Rivera (973) 365-5500

Religious and Socio-cultural Organizations

Saint Joseph's Polish Roman Catholic Church, Jean Karwan (973) 470-0921  
Saint Mary's Assumption Roman Catholic Slovak Church, M. Dmkovich (973) 779-0427  
Saint Stephen's Magyar Church, Reverend Skrzypek (973) 779-3282  
Hungarian Historical Society Representative, Mrs. Kirque (973) 836-4869  
Hispanic Information Center Representative, Maggie Rodriguez (973) 472-4670  
Hispanos Unidos Director, Lorenzo Hernandez (973) 472-4670  
Polish-English Translator, Mary Calka (973) 779-7069

**The format used to create the previous lesson plan developed for the Passaic High School History Department was based on information obtained from the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies*. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) website, as well as other helpful links can be accessed online at:**

[www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education)

New Jersey Department of Education Social Studies Curriculum  
Frameworks:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/frameworks/socialstudies/>