

Sand Capital of the World

Overview

Glass has been an important industrial product in LaSalle County, and especially Ottawa, for many years. To make glass, you need silica sand and coal. Prehistoric swamps and shallow oceans have made it possible for LaSalle County to have both of these natural resources.

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Grade Level

3rd and up

Purpose

Students will complete a map showing the locations of sand and coal deposits in LaSalle County. They will research how these natural resources were used by local companies.

Time Needed

1-3 class periods, depending on the amount of independent research

Materials Needed

Paper & colored pencils for map

Local history, industrial and geographical information sources

Standards

Illinois State Goal 15: Understand economic systems Illinois

State Goal 17: Understand world geography National Standard

3: Analyze Spatial Organization National Standard 16:

Changes that Occur in Meaning, Use, Distribution, &

Importance of Resources

Objectives

Students will

- draw & label a LaSalle County map

- identify silica sand & coal deposits on the map

- research uses & manufactured products of silica sand
- create a written document of their research findings

Suggested Procedure

1. Help students to draw an outline of LaSalle County. Use blue pencil to add Illinois and Fox Rivers. Add the towns of Ottawa, Naplate, Wedron, & Streator in purple.
2. Question students about the locations of the silica sand and coal deposits in relation to the towns. Talk about the swamps and shallow seas that once covered Illinois.
3. Add locations of silica sand & coal deposits using a different symbol for each. Don't forget to create a map key. Younger students would do this with the teacher. Older students could research and fill this in on their own.
4. With younger students, talk about the uses of silica sand and why Ottawa silica is the best (so pure); the need for lots of coal (silica sand has a very high melting point); and changing glass needs (milk bottles to car windows). Older students could do their own research.

Evaluation

Students will create a written paper to accompany their LaSalle County map explaining the importance of silica sand & coal to LaSalle. It could be in paragraph form, as a Venn diagram, a four square, or any other format you wish.

Extensions

Create a poster showing different glass products.

Use the same lesson format for clay deposits in LaSalle County.

Create an Illinois map locating minerals found through out the state.

Resources

LaSalle County Lore, Marilyn Rasmusen, Editor, LaSalle County Historical Society, 1991.

www.newton.dep.anl.gov Nature Bulletin No.587